

THE
Transforming Vision
OF
CHRIST,
IN THE
FUTURE STATE,
FROM
I JOHN iii. 2.

*Our Life is hid with Christ in God; when
Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then
shall ye also appear with him in Glory,
Colof. iii. 3, 4.*



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I JOHN iii. 2.

Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.



THE *Apostle* begins this Chapter with a Representation of the Love of God to Men in their Adoption; He enters upon the Account of it in Terms which are apt to raise the Wonder, and to fix the Attention of all God's Children; and well he might, for Adoption is so glorious an Effect of divine Love, as highly deserves both. That the Great God, who is so far above us, and so fully Blessed in himself, shou'd take Men, who were Strangers and Enemies unto him, and alienated from him by wicked Works, into the near Relation and Privileges of Children; this is admirable Love indeed, and may justly fill us with Astonishment! Behold, what manner of Love the Father hath bestow'd upon us, that we shou'd be called the Sons of God! v. 1. This was a Subject so delectable and

pleasant to the *Apostle's* Thoughts, that he knew not how to part with it, therefore he repeats it *u. 2. Beloved, faith he, now are we the Sons of God, &c. Wherein,*

First, He gives us a Character of the present Dignity and Privileges of Believers; They are the *Sons of God.*

Secondly, Here's an higher Dignity remaining for 'em, which is, 1. Partly *hid* and concealed from them at present; *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* 2. Partly *revealed* and *manifest*, in-somuch that the *Apostle* professeth a Certainty and Assurance of it; *We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.*

Thirdly, Here's the Circumstance of Time, when this Dignity shall be conferr'd on Believers, at *Christ's* second Appearance. *When he shall appear.*

Fourthly, Here's the *Apostle's* Proof and Demonstration of the Dignity and Privilege, so far as it is reveal'd and manifest; *For we shall see him as he is.*

These Words may be resolv'd into several
P R O P O S I T I O N S.

Prop. I. One choice Privilege that God at present confers upon all true Believers, is, to be his Children: Or, All Believers are at present dignified by God with the Privilege of Adoption.

Prop. II. There are higher Dignities and greater Privileges prepar'd, and in Reversion for them.

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Prop. III. The Fulness and Height of this Dignity, and blessed State that Believers shall be advanced to, is not here fully reveal'd, but partly hid and concealed from them.

Prop. IV. The Dignity and future Blessedness that Believers shall be promoted to, at the second Appearance of Christ, will lie in a perfect Likeness to him, caused by a Vision of him.

Prop. V. There is a Certainty or Assurance of this Blessedness and Dignity attainable by Believers in this Life; *For*, saith the Apostle, *we know it. Of these in their Order.*

Prop. I. One choice Privilege that God, at present, confers upon all true Believers, is to be his Children.

This is prov'd from *John i. 12.* *But as many as received him, to them gave he Power, Right or Privilege, to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.* This is the Privilege of One and All Believers, and of Believers only. All Unbelievers are the Children of another Father, even the Devil; for him they are like, and his Works they do. They are the Children of God by Creation, and so are the *Fall'n Angels*; but Believers only are the Children of God by *Regeneration* and *Adoption*. And this Relation is Originated and Founded in the Eternal Love of God, and our Marriage-Union to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which is made by Faith, *Gal. iii. 26.* *For we are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus.*

Now, how blessed are they who have the All-comprehending God for their Adopting Father! What can they want, who have an All-sufficient Father, *whose is the Earth, and the Fulness thereof*, to

provide for 'em, and take care of 'em? What Enemy or Danger need they dread, who have an Almighty Father to be their Shield, to protect and defend 'em; to whom they may on all Occasions have free Access; And who can make the *Shields* of the Earth, that is, Princes and Magistrates *to cover his Children?* Isa. iv. 5. Plal. xlvii. 9.

What can they be denied, who have a Father so full of Goodness and Compassion, that He's more ready to give, than they are to ask! How much better is our Heavenly Father, than any Earthly Fathers?

There are many Things that no Earthly Father *can do* for his Children; And there are many Things that most Earthly Fathers *will not do* for their Children.

An Earthly Father may give his Child a Portion of his Worldly Estate; but what Earthly Father can give his Child, tho' he love him never so dearly, a Portion of his Grace to enable him to manage and improve it to God's Glory? An Earthly Parent may make his Child Rich and Great in the World; but he can't make him Good, and Pious, and Rich towards God. He may give him new Clothes, but he can't communicate a new Heart, or a new Nature to him. He may gratify his carnal Desires, but can't sanctify them, or change his corrupt Nature, and super-induce upon it the Image of God. He may correct him, but 'tis not within his Compass to reform and cure him of his vitious Inclinations and corrupt Affections.

Again, There are many Things that Earthly Fathers *will not do* for their Children. They will not discover Love to *their Souls* by doing what they are able to prevent *their Loss*, and everlasting Destruction. They will not govern their own Temper, and master their Passions, that with Meekness and Patience they may instruct their Children; but provoke

voke them to Wrath by passionate Usage, and some make their Children Slaves, by making themselves Tyrants, whereby they do a *less Injury* to their Children by doing a *greater* to themselves.

But as to the Children of God, there is nothing that's fit and good for 'em, which their Heavenly Father either can't, or is unwilling to bestow on them. *The Lord will give Grace and Glory, and no good Thing will he with-hold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. He makes all his Children glorious within, for he sanctifies them with his Grace; and he will confer on them an external Glory too, for they shall be *Kings and Priests* to Himself in Heaven, in a more honourable Way than they bear the same Characters upon Earth. An Earthly King or Emperor can leave his Imperial Crown but to one of his Sons; the rest are put off with lower Preferment: Herein the Children of God have the Preheminence of the Sons of Earthly Princes, in that God bestows a Crown and a Kingdom upon every one of 'em. If an Earthly Father have many Children, the more he doth for one of 'em, the less he is able to do for the others; but the Multitude of God's Children is the Reason of no Diminution of the Portion or Inheritance of any one Individual, because the Estate is *Infinite* which they shall be possessed of.

Now what *Use* shou'd we make of this Doctrine? Are we the Sons of God?

1. Let us deport ourselves accordingly. See that your Carriage be suitable to the Dignity of this high Relation. Dignity must be answer'd with Duty. Let us then do nothing unworthy of our *Royal Pedigree*; nothing that may reflect upon the Honour of our Father; nothing sordid, mean and below ourselves, or that will discover a merose or

ignoble Spirit. We must lift up our Heads and Hopes above the World, and scorn to lie groveling upon this vile Dunghil, as if we were of an obscure Extraction, and our Father cou'd not give us a better Portion, than the Whole of this World amounts to. Let the Children of this World scramble for Earthly Revenues and Preferments, and seek their Portion in it, who have Right to no better : It becomes us, who are of the Blood-Royal of Heaven, to look higher, and to pursue more noble and generous Designs; not to disgrace our Family by minding petty and low Enjoyments. Our Affections must be plac'd upon the Objects of our high Hope and rais'd Expectation, even the undefil'd Inheritance reserv'd in Heaven for us, and for which our Heavenly Father is now training us up. All our Thoughts and Cares, all our Designs and Projects, all our Conversation and Employment ought to look Heaven-ward, and be all brought into a Subordination to our Pursuit of the Heavenly Inheritance. This is to act as Children of God.

Is God our Father? More particularly,

2. Let us be dutiful to Him, honour and reverence Him as a Father; and never give Him Cause to complain of us, as He once did of another People; *A Son honoureth his Father, and a Servant his Master: If I then be a Father, where is mine Honour? If I be a Master, where is my Fear?* Mal. i. 6. If we call God Father, but give Him not the Respect and Obedience which the Relation of a Father calleth for, and obliges to, we make him only a *Titular* Father. If then we expect that God should bear a Paternal Affection towards us, take a Fatherly Care of us, and perform the Office of a Father to us; Let us strive to perform the Duties of Children, be tender of his Honour, comply with

with his Will in all Acts of Obedience, trust in his Covenant, depend upon his Love, be ruled by his Law: Let us delight in God, long after his Presence, and rejoice in his Favour, which is better than Life.

Is God our Father? And, are we the Sons of God?

3. Let us live in the Admiration of this stupendious Display of his Love, the taking Hell-deserving Sinners into his near Relation. We are not worthy to be made his hired Servants, and shall we be made his Children? How marvelous is his Loving-kindness! This is not the manner of Men, O Lord God thou knowest! We were not only Strangers, but the Children of God's Enemies, Was not our Father an *Amorite*, and our Mother an *Hittite*? And have not our disloyal Parents transmitted a Principle of Rebellion and Enmity against God to us? And have we not acted upon this Principle in thousands of Transgressions, while we have sinn'd after the Similitude of *Adam*? And tho' this deserves everlasting Rejection, and that we be treated as Enemies; yet, contrary to our Deserts, doth the Lord overcome our Evil with his Good; our Enmity with his Clemency; our Corruptions with his invincible Grace? Doth he seek us in our Wanderings, and fetch us home to Himself with a mighty Hand, and reduce us from our Prodigalities, to the Orders of his own Family, and assume us into that Nearness of Relation and Affection, that henceforth he will call us *his Sons and Daughters*, and give us leave to call Him *our God and our Father*? Will he forget all our former Rebellions, and pass by all our Undutifulness and Stubbornness, and never upbraid us with it? Will he express himself with such Tenderness and melting Endearments, as if we had been always Faithful and Dutiful?

Dutiful, and had never at any time transgressed his Commands? What can we ascribe all this to, but astonishing and unconceivable Love! None but an Heavenly Father, who is Love itself, and whose Compassions fail not, would and could have acted thus.

What remains then, but that we charge our Souls to admire and adore this wonderful Emanation of his infinite and everlasting Love! *What manner of Love is this, that such as we shou'd be called the Children of God!*

Is God our Father?

4. Let us not be afraid of Dying, which is no more to a Believer, than the Returning of the Spirit to its God and Father. If God be your Father, Death, which is his Servant, will certainly be your Friend. And, tho' at first Sight it looks terrible, yet better Acquaintance with its Nature, Office, and Errand will abate that Terror; for Christ's Dominion over it makes a great Change in all these. As a Child boarded out at a Distance from home, when he sees one riding Post thro' the Streets arm'd with Sword and Pistols, as if he meant to ride over him and tread him down, he cries out terribly; but when he sees him near Hand and finds 'tis his Father's Servant sent to fetch him from School to his Father's House, his Fear is over, and he smiles and is glad.

So a Christian's apprehending Death under this Notion, should compose and satisfy him. Tho' Death dissolve natural Relations, those that subsist between Husband and Wife, Parents and Children, yet it touches not that spiritual Relation which unites Believers unto God.

Over that Relation Death has no Power, it follows the departed Spirit, and is not liable to the Fate of other Relations.

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Consequently your Dying is but your going Home to take Possession of the purchased heavenly Inheritance, or your retiring, like an Actor in a Comedy, into the attiring Room, to put on a better Dress, that you may appear with the more Advantage. And tho' by your Dying, you may leave many Children without an earthly Father or Mother to take Care of 'em, yet can't you leave 'em with your Heavenly Father, whose Care will have better and more certain Effects than yours could have had? *Leave thy fatherless Children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy Widows trust in me, Jer. xlix. 11.*

By this Doctrine I might also move those Children who have no Earthly Father, to call God their Father; to which they are also encouraged by that Text, *Pf. xxvii. 10. When my Father and my Mother forsake me, when they die and leave me, then the Lord will take me up.*

Prop. II. There are higher Dignities, and greater Privileges prepar'd and in Reversion for Believers: This Truth the Apostle doth not obscurely hint in that Expression, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.* As if he had said, We are very high in State, Dignity and Privileges, already, but e'er long we shall be far higher: We have much in Hand, but much more in Hope: We are already far higher than the Men of this World, and in a better State, but in a while we shall be higher than our selves. We have a Right to the Heavenly Inheritance, and are Heirs in Law-Title, tho' under Age, but in a while we shall be Possessors and Inheritors, and reap the Fruit of our Adoption, that is now hidden from us. We are here *in Viâ*, Travellers upon our Way, but e'er long we shall be *Comprehensores*, at the end of our Journey, at home in our Father's House, and in a fixed State of Blessedness;

ness; which is above all that we can possibly conceive at present. We have here the Right of Children, the *Jus ad Rem*, but the full Fruition is reserved for the Life everlasting. What might be added to prove or illustrate this Proposition, shall be transferr'd to those that follow.

Prop. III. The Fulness and Height of this Dignity that Believers shall be advanced to, is not now fully revealed, but is partly hid and concealed from them. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.*

Here it is requisite that I endeavour to state the Case, and shew you how far the future State of Blessedness is revealed to us, and how far hid from us.

To begin with the Affirmative.

1. The τὸ ὄν, or the Existence, Being, and Reality of a future glorious State is revealed. The improvement of the Light of Nature help'd the wiser Heathens to some wavering Conjectures, and to see some probability of such a State. They thought it was agreeable to the Divine Goodness to reward virtuous Souls in another Life; whence sprung their Notions of the *Elysian Fields*; of the *Nectar* and *Ambrosia* of the Gods; tho' they did not generally arrive at a positive Certainty of such a State: This is the Prerogative of Supernatural Revelation, to give us a full Assurance of it. It is only in the Gospel that *Life and Immortality are brought to light*, 2 *Tim.* i. 10. *Jesus Christ*, who hath abolished Death, and been in Heaven, hath given us a full and clear Sight of the Being of it, whereof we had but a dark Glimpse before: Yea, 'tis the very Design of the preaching of the Gospel to reveal Heaven to us, and to fit us for Heaven. For this glorious State is not only simply revealed and made manifest in the Gospel, but is revealed as a State prepared for some sort of Men, and attainable by

'em.

em. It is not notified only to exercise our Contemplation, or as a Subject of Speculation, and admiring Thoughts, but to engage our Study, and to draw forth our most diligent Endeavours, that we may arrive at the Possession of it. A great Part of the New Testament might be alledg'd to prove this; which, because 'tis so evident, and shines so clear in Scripture-Light, I shall pass over it.

2. The Price that was laid down for the Purchase of this State is reveal'd, and doth appear, and that is the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeem'd with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold from your vain Conversation received by Tradition from your Fathers, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb slain without blemish,* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Hence Heaven is call'd a *Purchased Possession*: *Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the Earnest of our Inheritance, until the Redemption of the Purchased Possession, until the Praise of his Glory,* Ephes. i. 14. And 'tis the Blood of Jesus Christ, which is the meritorious Price of this Purchase. This Blood not only stopp'd the Process of Justice, but purchas'd an Inheritance which Silver and Gold cou'd not buy. This Blood was typified by the Blood of those Beasts which were appointed by God to be offer'd up for Sacrifices under the Law: And I apprehend this is the Reason why it is called the *Life and Soul*, and is forbidden to be eaten. Not that *Moses* designs to talk Philosophically of the Nature and Essence of a Beast; but his Design is to let the People understand that the Blood of a Beast, which was sprinkled upon the Altar, being an Emblem of the Life of Man forfeited through Disobedience; and an Instrument of Expiation, they shou'd, out of Reverence to that Mystery signified by it, abstain from a rude quaffing and devouring of

of it. Moreover, the Blood being God's Part, cou'd not, without Sacrilege, be eaten by Man.

3. The Way to this glorious State, and the Means, on our Part, of obtaining it, or the Qualifications of the Persons that shall enjoy it, are clearly revealed, and do appear. Now, the Way is, *Faith* in Jesus Christ, and *Holiness* of Heart and Life. For *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life*, John iii. 16. As to Holiness of Heart, see *Verse 3. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a Man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God*. As to Holiness of Life, see *Heb. xii. 14. Follow Peace with all Men and Holiness, without which no Man shall see the Lord*. While we possess an evil Heart of Unbelief, and are under the Dominion of Sin, so long we are utterly disqualified for, and out of the Way to this State of Blessedness.

For, 'till we are born again, and made new Creatures, 'till God fulfill in us the good Pleasure of his Goodness, and the Work of Faith with Power, we are not the adopted Children of God; and before we are Children, we are not Heirs, nor can have any Right to the Inheritance; and 'till we be made Heirs, and have Right, we can't look for Possession: For, Possession follows Right, and our Right is founded upon our Faith and new Birth.

So that, in short, he who means to enter into the New *Jerusalem*, must go to it in the King's Highway of an Evangelical Faith and new Obedience.

Nothing will more certainly deprive us of Heaven than final Unbelief: We must have a Vision of Faith here, if we mean to have a Vision of Glory hereafter.

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We must be universally holy on Earth, if we design to be everlastingly glorious and happy in Heaven. Faith, Holiness and Happiness, God hath inseparably connected as the Means and the End, both in his eternal irrevocable Decree, and in his everlasting unchangeable Covenant of Grace; which is the Charter of the Christian's Privileges: And what God hath coupled and conjoyned together, no Man, nor Angel, can part, or put asunder. As no true Believer, or holy Person that is entirely devoted to God, that prefers him to all, and loves him above all, shall be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven; so not one Person shall be admitted into that Kingdom, who is not endowed with these Qualifications.

4. The efficient Cause and Object of this future Blessedness appears, and that is God, God in Christ. It was the Wisdom of God that contriv'd this Blessedness, his Power that effected, and prepar'd it, and his everlasting Love set his Wisdom and Power on Work in it, and not a previous Sight of his Creatures Merit. God first loved us, and therefore, from Eternity design'd to display that Love, in providing so glorious a Mansion for us, as well as in preparing us for the inhabiting it.

So that the whole Contrivance of Heaven, and our delightful Entertainment there, must be resolved into the unconceivable Love of God, as the efficient Cause of it. What is Heaven, but a Result of the infinite Love of God! *Rom. vi. 23. The Gift of God is Eternal Life.* Though it be elsewhere call'd a *Reward*, with Respect to the Order in which 'twill be bestow'd; yet this doth not at all hinder it from being, in other Respects, a *Gift*: For so superlative is its Worth, that the Love of God doth as much shine forth in the bestowing Heaven upon obedient Believers, as if they had done nothing for it, in Regard all they do is by

by the Assistance of his Grace. *Adam* was created out of Paradise, and afterwards put into it; to shew, that his Admission there, even in his Innocency, was of Grace; much more is it of Grace, upon our Recovery from the Fall.

Moreover, as God is the efficient Cause and Author, so he is the Object and ultimate End of our future Blessedness: For, what is Heaven, but the Enjoyment of God? What doth God take his People to Heaven for, but to make them happy with the everlasting Fruition of his glorifying Presence? Why doth God sanctify and enlarge the Faculties of his People, but to make them more fit to be exercised upon his Glory; and capable of taking in more of himself. God would have us seek ourselves in him, and our Felicity in his Glory; for such is his Royal Favour and Munificence, that he is pleased to bestow himself upon his People in all his Attributes, as their *everlasting Portion* and *exceeding great Reward*.

After what Manner God will communicate himself to his Saints in the future State, is not so clear; we do not know it now: But this is clear, and this we know, that their Happiness will consist in great and ravishing Communications from God. God himself is the *Sun* who is the Light of Heaven, and irradiates the Minds of his glorified Saints with the bright Beams of his Favour: He is the *Centre*, in whom they have perfect and undisturbed Rest: He is the Defence that keeps them all safe, and the Portion and Inheritance that they live upon, and are maintained by.

5. The Time of our Entrance upon this glorious State is indefinitely reveal'd, and that, with Respect to the Souls of Believers, is at Death; and with Respect to their full Possession, both in
Soul

Soul and Body, at the second Appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As soon as the Souls of Believers quit these Houses of Clay, whose Foundation is in the Dust, and are dislodged from these earthly tottering Tabernacles, they are immediately transported, by a Convoy of holy Angels, into the Celestial Paradise, and the Joys of Heaven, without halting in any middle Place. If it were not so, why did *Stephen* pray at the Article of Death, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit?* Acts vii. 59. And why did the Apostle *Paul* desire to be dissolved, that he might be with Christ, which he believed would be *far better* than his present State? *Phil.* i. 23. If his Soul was to sleep 'till the Resurrection, or be detain'd in Purgatory, he would have been more desirous to have stay'd on Earth, where, in some Measure, he enjoyed God; for, upon this Supposition, he would have been a Loser, and in a worse State than he was in here: For, what Communion could his Soul have with God, when it was lock'd up in Sleep, or frying in the Fire of Purgatory? Again, If the Souls of prepar'd Believers do not immediately, after they are loosened from the Body, ascend to Heaven, our blessed Saviour was deceived, or a Deceiver, when he assures the penitent Thief, *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,* Luke xxiii. 43. Nor would St. *John* pronounce those blessed that dye in the Lord, if they were not blessed. So that though the Time of the Departure of Believers be not revealed, yet this is revealed, and we may build upon it as a certain Scriptural Truth, that the Time of their Departure hence, is the Time of the Entrance of their Souls into the Heavenly Rest.

And no less certain it is, that Christ will make his second Appearance; and at the Time of his second Appearance, when he shall descend from

Heaven in his own Person, with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God; then the Dead in Christ shall rise first, the Bodies of Believers shall awake out of the Sleep of Death, be changed, and restored again to, and re-united to their Souls; and both their Souls and Bodies shall be made Partakers of the heavenly Blessedness, and be instated in a full Possession of it. At the Point of Death their Sin and Misery end, and their heavenly Happiness doth commence; but at the Day of God, when Christ shall come to be magnified in his Saints, and admir'd in them that do believe, then shall the Prison of the Grave be unlock'd, and the Prisoners brought forth, and quickened, and have a new Glory and Lustre put upon them, that shall make them shine as the Stars in the Firmament: And then is the Time when the Blessedness of Believers shall be consummated. *When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in Glory,* Col. iii. 4. Christ, the King of Saints, will have his Train, at this great Solemnity, fill'd up with glorious Souls acting in glorify'd and radiant Bodies. At his first Coming, because he came to suffer, and dye, he came in Obscurity, without Noise and Stir, in the Form of a Servant, as most suitable to his Design: But at his second Coming, when he shall come to judge the World, and to reward his faithful Servants, for whom he dyed, he will put on his Robes, appear in Pomp and State, with such a glorious Equipage, and such a numerous Retinue, as never was seen before; he will come with Power and great Glory, like a magnificent Prince, or a Judge coming to keep an Assize, to the Terror of his Enemies, and the Joy of his Friends.

6. The Perfection of this glorious State doth likewise appear, because it is our End, our ultimate

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mate End. Now the ultimate End of a rational Being, must be something commensurate to its Capacities ; otherwise it can't be happy, and at Rest in the Enjoyment of it.

If all our Faculties be not gratified with suitable Objects, if but one rational Desire remain unsatisfied, this will spoil our Felicity, and infer some Degree of Misery. Therefore that which doth make a Child of God happy, must be something proportionable to the Powers of his Soul, that will answer all his Desires, fill up all his Wants, and give full Satisfaction to all his reasonable Appetites ; that hath nothing ungrateful in it, no Mixture of Corruption or Bitterness ; and consequently, it must be some perfect Good. It is impossible to form a right Notion of Man's true Happiness, but we must include Perfection in it. As the Materials of the *Holy of Holies* were the same with those in the *Sanctuary* ; in like Manner, the Excellencies of the Saints in Glory are the full-blown Flowers of the Buds of Grace, and Heaven doth not change a Saint, *quoad speciem*, in Respect to his Condition, or moral Dispositions, but *quoad gradum*, only advance him to a State of greater Perfection in the same Kind, which shall never end. Christ gave various Officers for the perfecting of the Saints, 'till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 12, 15. And in Chap. v. 25, 26, 27. we read, that Christ loved his Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing with Water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, but that it should be holy, and without Blemish. By Spot, we may understand the Deformity of our Works and Actions : By Wrinkle, any Duplicity,

plcity, or Insincerity in the Aim or Intention; Or, by *Spot*, greater Sins that defile the Conscience, and stain the Reputation; and by *Wrinkle*, lesser Sins, those of Infirmary, which are some Blemish to our spiritual Beauty. Now, this Measure of Perfection, Beauty and Purity of the Church is not to be found on Earth, therefore, there is a future State, wherein they shall be thus perfected with a sin-less and unspotted Beauty, and in this Form presented to her Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus. No Stain, Contagion, or Scar shall remain in Heaven, no Symptom of the Old Man, nor any Thing that may render Believing Souls uncomely in the Sight of Christ, and of God the Father.

7. The Everlastingness and Perpetuity of this glorious State doth appear, and is manifest: As *one* saith, "Was there a Possibility, or at least, "a Suspicion of losing this happy State, it would "cast an Aspersions of Bitterness upon all their "Delights, they wou'd not enjoy one Moment's "Repote, but the more excellent their Happiness, "the more stinging would their Fear be of parting with it." But in *God's Presence there is Fullness of Joy, at his Right-Hand there are Pleasures for evermore*, Psal. xvi. 11. The Saints Happiness in Heaven must be eternal, because the Springs and Causes of it are eternal; and as the Cause is, such is the Effect. Now there are two Causes of the Saints Happiness, *viz.*

The glorifying Presence of God,
His Right-Hand.

By the glorifying Presence of God, we are to understand two Things as comprized in it.

(1.) The Manifestation of his glorious Perfections.

(2.) The Exhibition or Assurance of his Favour.

Now,

Now, these two Causes are eternal : God will never withdraw *his Presence* for one Moment from the glorify'd Spirits ; and *his Right-Hand* is able to support his Saints in this blessed State to all Eternity. 'Tis impossible our Happiness shou'd either be diminish'd or lost, either by the Weakening or Removal of these Causes that continue us in the Enjoyment of it : God never will desert them, the vital Splendor of his blessed Face shines continually upon them in the same Degree ; the Soul satisfying Presence of God will be the continual Object of our Beatitude ; and the Right-Hand of his Power will support our receptive Faculties in Exercise, even in their most exalted Operations on this Object ; and while these continue, our Happiness must needs continue too. Oh ! how blessed are they, who are sure to be happy 'till God's Omnipotency be turn'd into Impotency ; or his immutable Love change into Hatred. This Truth shines with an evident Light in Holy Writ, *Then we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air ; and so shall we be ever with the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 17.* Like as the Torments of the Damn'd in Hell admit of no Spark of Hope, that it shall be ever better with them, by which to refresh their everlasting Night of Sorrows ; no, not after the Revolution of Millions of Years : So the Joys of the perfected Spirits in Heaven admit of no Degree of Fear that ever it shall be worse with them, whilst God is God, to abate or damp the Fulness of their Pleasures. The Gate of Heaven is lock'd and seal'd up with the eternal irreversible Decree of the King of Heaven, so that there's no going out of it, no Back-door of Apostasy there. Once a *free Denizen* of the *New Jerusalem*, and ever so ; there's no *disfranchizing* of the Burgesses of the Heavenly Corporation. 'Tis true the Angels once fell from Heaven,

Heaven; they were Inhabitants of it, but kept not their first Habitation; but the glorify'd Saints are confirm'd in their blessed State, by the everlasting Covenant of Grace, and the Perpetuity of Christ's Priesthood, who is a Priest for ever according to the Order of *Melchisedeck*; so that sooner shall the fixed Stars desert their Stations, than one Saint in Heaven fall from his blessed Condition. They can't be thrust out of Heaven against their Will, by any hostile Violence, for no Enemy can approach near the Walls of this City: The Devil and his Regiment are chain'd up at a vast Distance in the infernal Vaults of Hell. And we can't suppose the Saints shou'd be willing, of their own Accord, to quit their Happiness, because both their Judgments shall be rectify'd to know and discern their own Felicity, and their Wills and Affections fully contented and satisfy'd with it: And nothing can possibly be suppos'd that should work in them any Dislike of their happy Condition; and this Everlastingness and Perpetuity is the Crown of their Crown, the Top of their Celestial Joy, and one of the most delicious Flowers in the Heavenly Paradise. As the Eternity of Hell's Torments is the Sting and most dreadful Accent that renders them utterly unsupportable; so the Eternity of heavenly Joys is what makes Heaven to be itself.

Now I proceed,

2. To shew you, how far this future State of Blessedness remaining for Believers is hid from us; or in what Respects it doth not yet appear what we shall be: And 'tis hid from us in a double Respect.

(1.) As to the Mode or Way of Manifestation or Appearance.

(2.) As to the Mode or Manner of Fruition.

(1.) As

(1.) As to the Mode or Way of Manifestation or Appearance.

[1.] It doth not appear to our Senses; the Glory of Heaven lyes out of their Reach, *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. ii. 9.* It is so far remote from the Discoveries of Sense, that it passeth all Men's Understandings, in this State; therefore, the Enjoyments of Heaven are set forth by Things not seen, *2 Cor. iv. 18. While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen are temporal, but the Things which are not seen are eternal:* Not but that the Celestial Glory shall be visible hereafter to glorify'd Eyes; but is, at present, invisible to a natural Eye. The Eye is too weak, in its present State, to look steddily upon the Sun, much more is it too weak to look upon the Sun of Righteousness, whose Glory is Ten Thousand Times more radiant than the Sun in its Noon-day Brightness: The Happiness we expect is beyond the utmost Bounds of the *Sphere* of Sense; such is the darling Splendor of the heavenly State, that a Sight of it would overwhelm and destroy our natural Organs, unless strengthen'd with supernatural Vigour, as doubtless *Stephen's* was.

God said to *Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 20. Thou canst not see my Face, for there shall no Man see me and live.* God's Glory is too much for Man's Infirmary to apprehend, it wou'd astonish him into the Shadow of Death, so as to make him a dead Man. The outward Court of God's Palace, or the starry Heaven is, in some Degree, expos'd to our View, and doth appear to invite us to enquire further; but the Heaven of Heavens, which is the Seat of the Blessed, and the Palace of the King of

Saints, is out of Sight; God hath cover'd it from an ocular Inspection, because he wou'd have us walk by Faith, not by Sight, 2 Cor. v. 7.

[2.] It doth not appear to Reason by natural Revelation, or logical Inferences, *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. The *natural Man* may mean him that hath no other Light but the natural Reason of his Soul. The Eye of Reason, unassisted with supernatural Revelation is too dim and short-sighted to pierce into the future Blessedness of the Saints. Otherwise, if this State lay within the Grasp of natural Reason, why did not the learned Heathens, who made a very great Improvement of Reason, give us a Discovery of it? But alas! they were in the dark about it, some obscure Notions and hovering Conjectures some of them had of the Immortality of the Soul, and a Reward after this Life, for the Virtuous who had liv'd well here; but few of them reach'd any farther. Saith Dr. *Outram*, " This I will affirm, that whatsoever " was done well by the Heathens, it was done by " Virtue of some Part of the Truth which " Christ did fully reveal; they had some broken " Beams of Truth thro' a Cloud, but he un- " cover'd the Sun itself: They had strong and " vehement Conjectures of many Things, which " he made certain and infallible." The Light of Nature in these Matters is an uncertain Light, it doth not give us a clear and true Prospect of the Entertainment that pious Souls shall have on the other Side the Grave. Man could never have climb'd up so high upon the Ladder of meer Reason, as to peep within the Veil, and see what God is unto, and doth for the Inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. Nor can the Eye of Reason

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son see any Prefages or Tokens of a Resurrection of Bodies that lie in the dark Graves, and of scatter'd Bones, and Dust of Carcasses, that have for Thousands of Years been consuming in the Earth. Thus it doth not yet appear to humane Reason what we shall be. The Works of God, the Sun, Moon and Stars do not tell Men's Reason, that God will make them more glorious than these Creatures; but God tells the Faith of his People, that they shall outshine 'em in Glory.

[3.] It does not fully appear under all the Advantages and Aids of supernatural Revelation. Christ has taken away the Vail from off the Face of *Moses* by the New Testament, and the Ministration of the Spirit, so that both *Moses* and the Prophets diffuse a Light which before was hid under a Cloud. But there still remains a Vail upon the *New Testament*, which will not be done away till Christ himself appear; *We walk by Faith, not by Sight*, 2 Cor. v. 7.

During the Dispensation of the Law, the People were admitted only into the *Courts* of the Lord's House. Now all God's People being *Kings and Priests unto God and the Lamb* may go within the *first Vail* into the *Holy Place*, to minister unto the Lord, and offer to him their Spiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise. But we must not follow our Fore-runner beyond the *Second Vail* into the *Holy of Holies*, till we have pass'd through a State of Preparation, and have finished our Work.

To transfer the Comparifon from the *Jewish Tabernacle* to a Common Building; We are, by the Dispensation of the Gospel, got into a Story above the *Jews*, and can see much farther than they were able to do; but are not yet ascended to the highest Rooms, nor admitted into the Presence-Chamber. So that it doth not yet appear even to Believers, the Sons of God, what they shall be. And this seems

seems most fully to reach the Apostle's Meaning when he says, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be.*

Gospel-Ministrations give us a far clearer Prospect of Heaven, than the Law gave those who heard it, and have a greater Efficacy in changing the Minds of them that sit under 'em, being succeeded by the *Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. But we shall not be perfectly chang'd into the Likeness of Christ, till we see him as he is.

There is more or less of the future Glory appearing at present to Believers, in proportion to the Strength and Liveliness of their Faith; but the strongest and most lively Faith is unable to make Discoveries of the Future State of Believers equal to what immediate Intuition will do. The best Means of Conveyance that God affords his Children on Earth is a Narrative or Report of Things unseen; the proper and full Appearance of 'em they must wait for, in Hope, till the Coming of the Lord; and the Expectation thereof shou'd move them to pray, *Even so come, Lord Jesus.*

[4.] It doth not appear by the Reports of the Saints that have been in Heaven, and are risen from the Dead. 'Tis true, some arose from the Dead to attend our Lord Jesus at his Resurrection, who arose as the first Fruits of them that sleep; but are their Reports of the Future State left upon Record for our Information? God cou'd daily dispatch Messengers from Heaven to make Report to us of the Bliss and Pleasures of that Place, who might tell us what a good and pleasant Country it is, and how well they live who are Inhabitants of that Region, like so many Kings and Princes. But we see he doth not, having given us a more sure Word of Prophecy.

(2.) The Future State of Blessedness is hid. As to the Mode or Manner of Fruition.

1. Whe-

[1.] Whether all the Communications of God to the glorified Saints will not be made through Jesus Christ, as the Mediator of Fruition; Or, Whether the Beatifick Vision be not only a Representation of God's Attributes to us in some Individuals of all the various Species of his Works in their utmost Perfection and Beauty, as in a Glass; and especially in the glorified Humanity of our Mediator Jesus Christ. How far the divine Essence will be knowable by us, and what kind of Impressions the Manifestation of the divine Perfections will make upon our glorified Faculties: These Things do not appear to us. But this doth appear, and is reveal'd, that the Godhead is altogether Invisible to corporeal Sense; and he is so far Invisible both to Angels and Men, as not to be comprehended by any or all of 'em, so as that the whole of Himself should be known to them. *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection?* Job xi. 7, 8, 9. How little are we able to comprehend the Perfections of God, particularly his Wisdom, which is infinitely higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell, longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea?

[2.] It doth not appear how, or after what manner separate Souls converse and hold Communion one with another, by what *Medium* or *Species* they communicate Conceptions. Whether they have some pure *Ethereal Vehicles*, organiz'd for that Purpose, and suitable to their State, to supply the want of the Body, till it be rais'd again, and re-united to them at the Resurrection. And how far they shall know one another, and whether there shall be any Distinction of Sexes after the Resurrection: These Things do not appear to us, but are far above our Investigation. We must confess ourselves ignorant of them.

[3.] As

[3.] As to the Dimensions and Degrees of this Blessedness, it doth not yet appear how Glorious and Blessed we shall be. And I take this to be the principal Import of the Words, *It doth not yet appear what we shall be*; that is, how full of Joy, how Glorious, and how Happy. *Now we are the Sons of God*, but the Fruit of our Adoption is yet hidden; for our Happiness is in Heaven, a Place invisible to our Senses, where Christ our Head is in the Glory of God his Father; but we shall be as happy as Heaven can make us: Not infinitely Blessed as God is, but we shall have a Blessedness suitable to our State and Capacity, and unconceivably above all the Happiness we are capable of in this lower World, the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, he that attains but to the lowest Degree of Glory there, is far happier than the richest and most magnificent Prince on Earth; and wou'd not for a Thousand Worlds exchange Conditions with him. So glorious and happy shall the Children of God be, when they come to their Estate in Heaven, that no Similitude taken from humane Things, can sufficiently set it forth; no Tongue of Men or Angels adequately express it. We hear much of it at present, and taste and feel more; but when we come to enjoy the Blessedness of this State, we shall say as the Queen of *Sheba* did of King *Solomon's* Magnificence, that one Half was not told us. O what a vast Disparity is there between the Saints present Conceptions and Forecasts, and their Future Enjoyments! One may as easily tell what Complection a Man is of, and describe the Qualities of his Mind by a Sight of his Footstep, as we can tell what the Glory of Heaven is by those dark Footsteps and faint Resemblances of it which we see here, at this great Distance.

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Let me now assign some probable Reasons why it doth not more fully appear what we shall be.

1. The All-wise God, who is the Governour of the World, sees it fit there shou'd be some *Arcana Imperii, State-Secrets*, Things not to be divulg'd, *Prov. xxv. 2.* 'Tis not the Way of Princes to impart all their Counsels to their Subjects. If God shou'd have communicated and discover'd some Things, that he hath lock'd up in his own Breast, it might have interfer'd with some Designs that God will carry on by his People in this World. They wou'd not have minded the Inferior Concerns of this World so much as God wou'd have them, if the other World shou'd have been laid open before 'em. Besides, Precious Things are not made Common; Gold is hid in the Bowels of the Earth, and Pearls in the Sea, out of Sight; and why may not the Wisdom of God direct him to hold a Proportion in his Works of Glory to his Works of Nature? He brings both Sorts to Perfection by Degrees. As when we look upon a young Oak lately sprung up, we can't tell to what Dimensions it will, in Time, grow, how high and how thick it will be; so if we look upon the Graces of a Saint in his Minority, we can't tell into what glorious Dimensions, or to what an high Stature they will flourish in Eternity.

2. God knows we are not capable of bearing a full Discovery of the Glory of the Future State, whilst we are so imperfect and weak. Our Eye is too feeble for so strong a Light, our Faculties too narrow and large for such large, comprehensive, and sublime Objects; and much Wisdom is seen in suiting Objects to our Faculties. As the Wisdom of a Father will direct him not to send his Son to the University, before he is able to take in the

the Discoveries to be made there : So the Wisdom of God will not open to us the glorious Visions of Heaven, 'till he hath train'd us up in his School of Grace for the Participation of them. For, according to the *School Maxim*, whatever is received, is receiv'd according to the Capacity of the Receiver. An outward Revelation of Heaven, without an inward receiving Capacity, suited to apprehend it, wou'd make little Impression on us. If ye pour never so much Water upon a Bottle, it can but be filled, and all the rest runs over and is spilt, because the Bottle is not capacious enough to receive it. So if God shou'd pour upon us the bright Rays of the Future Glory, we cou'd not contain them, nor bear up under 'em ; we are not Vessels capacious enough to receive them.

3. God will have us walk by Faith, and believe in Him whom we have not seen ; and such are pronounced Blessed, John xx. 29. *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* God hath drawn a Curtain over the Future State, and conceal'd it from the Eye of Sense to make an open Discrimination between Believers and Unbelievers. For if Heaven were visible to us, and the Mouth of the Bottomless-Pit open and in sight, 'twou'd be hard to discern the Difference ; for this wou'd be an outward Restraint upon wicked Men, who were not inwardly chang'd, and cause 'em to put on the Appearance of good Men. Now God wou'd have his People not only live by Faith, but so to express this Faith that it may be conspicuous, and visibly distinguish them from all Unbelievers and wicked Men. Wicked Men live by Sense like Brutes, and judge of Things by Sight and Feeling ; but God will have his Children trust him for a Future Happiness, which they never saw, and renounce their Earthly Hopes and Possessions to be Partakers of it. He will have 'em live above this World,

World, and correct the Errors of Sense by such a Faith as is the Evidence of Things not seen, the Substance of Things hoped for. Now *Hope that is seen, is not Hope*, Rom. viii. 24. God will be trusted for Future Rewards, and therefore keeps our Inheritance out of sight.

4. To keep us breathing and longing after a full Knowledge and View of it. God keeps the best Part of our Portion to the last to provoke and whet our Desires after it; He wou'd have the Souls of his Children to hold on in a progressive Motion till they arrive at a compleat Rest in Himself, their proper Center. He allows us a Competency of Spiritual Gifts, and gives us such Discoveries of Himself as are suitable to our present State; Enough to establish our Hopes and confirm our Faith, but not enough to satisfy our Souls, or terminate and fill up our Desires. The present Attainments and Enjoyments of Believers leave Room for Desires of higher Ones, that they may look Homeward, and be breathing after a Consummation of what is begun here. It is the Will of our Heavenly Father that Heaven shou'd be first desir'd and sought, before it be possess'd, that it may be the more valu'd when 'tis possess'd, and his Love in giving it eternally had in Admiration.

I shall finish with this *Caution*,

That the Non-appearance of some Things about the Future State of Glory is no Prejudice to the certain Existence thereof. It is no less real, for being Invisible, therefore its Invisibleness shou'd not enervate our Minds in seeking after it. Because at present it doth not appear how glorious and happy the Children of God shall be, it doth not therefore follow that they shall never be any Happier, or have any more Glory put upon them, than they have at present. If we are resolv'd to believe nothing

thing but what we can see (Pardon the Expression!) we shall not believe that we have any Faces, which we never saw but by Reflection at Second-hand; we shall not believe there is a God, Angel or Spirit, or that we have Souls; for did we ever see any of these? So that such a Principle wou'd quickly run us into Sadducism and Atheism, and at last to Hell.

The Improvement.

1. Hence see that the Doctrine of Perfection in this Life is a false Doctrine. For it doth not yet appear what we shall be, therefore we are not in our highest State either of Holiness or Happiness. The best Saints are but imperfectly sanctify'd; there is but an incomplete Restoration of God's Image in their Souls. Where is the Man who dare say he hath made his Heart clean, or that there is no Sin there; or that perfect Love to God reigns there?

Object. We read Col. ii. 10. *And ye are Compleat in him, who is the Head of all Principality and Power.*

I Answer; They were so compleat in Christ, as to need no Traditions of Men, to perfect his Doctrine; Saving Knowledge and Virtue were attainable by the Gospel without either the *Heathen Philosophy*, or *Jewish Rudiments*. This is plainly the Apostle's Meaning, as will appear to any careful Reader of that Chapter. I may add, We are at this Day so compleat in Christ and his Gospel, as to need no new Inspirations to perfect either our Faith, Knowledge or Obedience, our imperfect Knowledge is enough for the Way.

Object. We read also Heb. x. 14. *That by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

I Answer;

I Answer ; This gives the Error no Support ; for *Perfecting* in that Verse signifies *Cleansing* from the Evil of Sin, by an *expiatory Sacrifice* ; as appears from the first Verse, where you read that the *Jewish Sacrifices* cou'd not make the Comers unto them perfect, which is expounded in the fourth Verse by their being unable to take *away Sin*, that is, the *Guilt*, not the *Power* of Sin. Moreover, 'tis the Observation of a judicious Critick, that our State of Imperfection was typified by the sprinkling of the Blood of the Bullock, and of the Goat. For this being sprinkled within the Veils to purify *both* the Apartments of the Tabernacle, signifies to us the wonderful Defilement and contagious Nature of Sin, which had pierc'd unto the most holy Place ; Intimating also, that the highest and most eminent Services in our Worship are polluted with Sin, and need Purification by the Blood of Christ.

To conclude this Inference : If the Devil and Mens own Pride so far blind and deceive them, that they believe they are already perfect, and live without Sin ; no Wonder if there grow up in them a Contempt of the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, as Things below them. Why shou'd they confess Sin, pray for more Grace, hear the Gospel any longer, who are already perfect ? For the Design of these Ordinances is to weaken the Body of Sin, to enable us to finish our Conquest over it, and to perfect the Graces of the Saints, which Ordinances wou'd be useless to them, were they already perfect.

2. This Doctrine shou'd give Check to an overbold Curiosity and Inquisitiveness about the Nature of the future Blessedness. Let us not be so solicitous to know what Heaven is, as how to get there ; we ought to confine our Search within the

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Bounds of God's Revelation, and fear that Affection of Knowledge which overthrew our first Parents in Paradise; lest as it lost them the Earthly, it shou'd lose us the Heavenly Paradise.

3. Behold and admire the stupendious Love of God, who designs to make us so glorious and happy. It appears plainly enough that we are now Sinners to a very great Degree, altogether unworthy of what we have in Hand, much more of what we have in Hope. We deserve not to stand upon the Borders of the Heavenly Country, how much less to feed upon the Fruits of it. We deserve not to approach the Suburbs of the *New Jerusalem*, much less to be made free of it. Now for Hell-deserving Sinners to become Heaven-possessing Saints; for Lumps of Earth and Sin to shine with a brighter Lustre, and a more sparkling Glory than the Stars in the Sky; what manner of Love is this! How worthy to be admir'd and ador'd! Let us then charge our Souls to live in the thankful Admiration of it. 'Tis not enough that we believe the Sincerity of God's Love, we must admire the Greatness of it. What God hath *already done* for our Souls in our Regeneration and Adoption, is enough to confute the Remains of our Infidelity, and to establish our Belief of the Reality of his Love; and what he hath reveal'd, he will *do further* for us in our Glorification, when he will perfect the good Work which he hath begun in us, and confer upon us the Fruits of our Adoption, is enough to raise our Admiration of the exceeding Greatness of it.

4. Though it doth not fully appear what we shall be, yet we have Reason to bless and praise God for those Discoveries, which he hath given us concerning the Future State of Blessedness. We are not left in the Dark what shall become of us after Death,

Death, nor at Uncertainties how God will dispose us in the other World, which is Matter of the highest Thankfulness. And God hath not put us off with obscure Intimations, but has given us a lively Hope through Grace. God might have set us our Work to do, and bound us to it by virtue of his supreme Authority over us, and have wholly conceal'd from us the Issue; He might have left us without any other Encouragement to his Service, than what we cou'd have deriv'd from the bare Probability of a future Recompence. But hath the Lord not only design'd and prepar'd a Reward for us, but also made known his glorious Purposes, in marvellous Declarations, in sweet Foretastes and Earnests? What Obligations to Love and Gratitude are here! Let us speak Good of his Name, that he hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel; that he hath given a true Map of the New *Jerusalem*, prepared and new cast up the Way to it, *Isai. lxii. 10.*

5. Let the Children of God rejoice in the Safety of their Spiritual State. Though your Future Life be in some Degree hid from you, yet this doth not lessen the Certainty of its Existence, because *'tis hid with Christ in God, Coloss. iii. 3, 4.* 'Tis hid in him, not only in Point of Secrecy, but also of Safety. Here the Glory of God's Children is hid under a mean Outside, and with many Infirmities and Misreports, but nevertheless 'tis secure; and when the Veil of this Flesh shall be rent asunder, and Men's Understandings shall be clear'd from all Prejudices and Mistakes, by a true convincing Light that shall represent Things as they are, then how illustriously, how visibly will their Glory shine forth in the Eyes of all? Here the Saints of God are as precious Pearls hid in the Dust; but e're long God will take them out of the Dust and rub them

up, and then they will appear in their native Beauty and Splendor, when God shall have clear'd up their Innocency as the Light, and their Integrity as the Noon-day.

Prop. IV. The Glory and Blessedness of the Children of God in the Future State will consist in a Likeness to Christ, caused by a Vision of him.

Here my *First* and Main Business will be to shew you, wherein this Likeness to Christ consists and that both with Respect to its Subjects and their proper Qualities. The *Subjects* are either the *Souls*, or the *Bodies* of the Children of God. They shall be like unto Christ in *both*.

1. In their *Souls*, and this Likeness lies especially in these Three Qualities: (1.) In Knowledge (2.) In Sanctity. (3.) In Blessedness.

With respect to their *Souls* Believers shall be like Christ.

(1.) In Knowledge. Here they know but in Part very imperfectly, obscurely and confusedly; but there they shall *know as they are known*. The Knowledge of Christ is perfect, without any Ignorance, Error or Mistake; so shall the Knowledge of the Saints in Light be, without any culpable Ignorance, Error or Mistake. His Knowledge is particular and distinct, He knows all his Sheep by Name; and doubtless the Knowledge of the glorified Saints will be more particular and distinct than it is here. It is very probable we shall know every Individual Saint in Glory, even such as we knew not here.

But more Particularly : As our Knowledge will be like Christ's, so Christ will be the most immediate entertaining Object of our Knowledge ; *We shall see him as He is.* And these following will be the Properties of that Beatifick Vision.

1.) We shall see Christ more clearly and evidently ; not through a Glass darkly, but *Face to Face*, as the Expression is 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Now we have intellectual Views of Christ in the Word and Sacraments, and in his Works, but then we shall see him, not with a Reflex, but with a direct Act of Vision. This Seeing through a Glass intimates both the Obscurity and the Difficulty of our present Knowledge, but in the Future State 'twill be both clear and easy. The Phrase *Face to Face* is by some thought an Allusion to *Moses's* Familiarity with God, represented in *Numb. xii. 7, 8. My Servant Moses is faithful in all mine House, with him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches, and the Similitude of the Lord shall he behold.* But the Difference between the Knowledge that *Moses* had, and the Knowledge of the Future Life, is far greater than the Difference between *Moses's* Knowledge, and the Knowledge of other Prophets. This mental Sight of Christ doth admit of some Latitude and Degrees. The Believing Patriarchs, Prophets, and Old-Testament Saints saw Christ at a Distance, as one that was to come, through the Lattefs of the Promises, Prophecies, Types and Sacrifices, by the Prospective of Faith : This was a dark Sight. New-Testament Believers see Christ with the Retrospect of Faith, as one already come, and who hath suffer'd in the Flesh, answer'd the Types, and fulfill'd all Righteousness, and is risen again, and ascended into Heaven, there to remain interceding for us till the Time of the Restitution of all Things. And this

is a clearer Light, than the Old-Testament Saints had.

They who liv'd in our Saviour's Time had still a clearer Sight, for theirs was Ocular as well as Mental ; but none of these do rise so high as the Beatifick Vision, which is a perfectly clear, full and immediate Sight, without the Interposition of any *darkning Medium*. In a Word ; We shall see Jesus Christ with that Clearness and Perspicuity Creatures are capable of, with a mental Vision ; for Christ will exhibit or present his divine Nature more clearly then to the Eyes of our Minds.

2.) 'Twill be not only a clear, but a familiar Vision. Jesus Christ will unbosom Himself, and communicate his Secrets to us as one Friend doth to another, and entertain us with the nearest Intimacies of Communion. 'Tis a Sight join'd with Acquaintance and Converse, which will raise our Happiness to the highest Degree. 'Tis a fruitive Sight, we shall so see him as to enjoy him, and Enjoyment far surpassing a Confluence of all Creature-Comforts. For we shall see him in all our Relations wherein he stands to us, as our Head and Husband, as our Redeemer and Saviour, as our eldest Brother and best Friend ; as one who gave Himself a Ransom for us, spent his dearest Blood for us, rescued us out of the Hands of our worst Enemies, took us into a near Union to Himself and who gave forth his Spirit to prepare and fit us for this Sight of him in Glory. And how much doth this add to the Sight ! If Jesus Christ was never such an excellent Person, never so Rich, and Amiable ; yet what wou'd the Sight of him have signified to us, if we had had no Interest in Him, if He had been none of ours ? But now when the Saints can at once see both Excellency and Propriety, both Worth and Interest in Jesus Christ, what a Sight will this be ! When they shall be-

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hold this glorious and excellent Person admir'd for his Beauty and Glory both by Angels and Men, and be able to claim a Right to him as their own, in whom and all that he hath they have an undoubted Property, and Interest, what wou'd one give for such a Sight !

3.) 'Twill be a Transforming Vision ; for we shall see Christ, not only as the Object of our Felicity, but as the Cause of it, with a vigorous and efficacious Intuition. The bright Rays of this Sun of Righteousness darting upon our glorified Eyes, that is, illuminating our Understandings, have an Assimilating Virtue to change us by a Reflexion of Glory, into the Similitude of Christ. There is something of this done here by the imperfect Sight of Faith, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all with open Face beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Silver set against the Sun by the Beams thereof cast upon it, becomes it self radiant. This Transformation of the Soul into the Image of Christ is begun here by looking on Christ in the Glass of the Gospel, but is perfected when our Sight shall be clear and full. *Moses* put away the Veil that hung over his Face, when he appear'd before the Lord, and by this Beholding of God had his Face enlightned, and shining with Beams ; but how will our Souls shine with the Beams of Heavenly Light, when the Veil of Ignorance shall be wholly taken away from the Face of our Understandings, and we shall see Christ Face to Face ! The Light of Heaven is the Light of Life, the Presence of Christ is Vital. A Stone, though seen by us, can't see us again, but much more valuable is the Sight of a Friend, who can act Kindness upon us, and reciprocate Visions with Life and Pleasure. We shall not only look upon Christ, but Christ will look upon us : And if one Look of Christ struck

Peter to the Heart, and chang'd Him into a Penitent Sinner; When the same Christ shall look on his People in Heaven, what an Influence will that Sight have to charm them into his own Likeness!

There are Two Things requisite to the obtaining the Perfect Knowledge of any Object. That the knowing Faculties be well dispos'd, and in a perfect State: And, that the Object do manifest itself after that Manner which is sufficient to fill up the Capacity of the Faculty rais'd to that Height of Perfection.

There are both these in Heaven. For as our Faculties shall be exalted to their Perfection; so God will manifest his Attributes in such a manner, that they shall fill up our largest Desires. And it can't be conceiv'd but that such a Sight of God in Christ shou'd transform our Souls into his Likeness.

4.) 'Twill be an Amorous, Affectionate, and Soul-warming Vision. *Ex Aspectu oritur Amor.* Love makes its Entrance at the Door of the Eye. *The Eye affecteth the Heart,* Lam. iii. 51. The Hearts of the Saints will be wondrously affected with the Glory and Beauty of Christ, and the Effusion of his Love on 'em, which they shall take in with their glorified Eyes. Such is the Magnetick Power of Christ's Excellencies and Love, that the full Display thereof can't but draw forth the Heart after Him with an irresistible Motion. It is as possible to separate the Light and Heat of the Sun, as that the Irradiations of the Saints Minds from Christ in Heaven shou'd be unaccompanied with correspondent Impressions of Love in their Hearts. The Love of Christ, as 'tis represented to the Intellect in its full Dimensions, how will it constrain the Heart to love him with a boundless Love! Here our Light is dim, and therefore our Love is cold;

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we know Christ but little, and therefore love him
 little. But in Heaven, when our Light will be
 clear, our Love will be strong. Our Souls will run
 over in Torrents of holy seraphick Love; they will
 burn with sacred Flames, whilst Christ is opening
 to us the rich Treasures of his everlasting Love,
 and making us know by Experience and Feeling
 what he hath done for us. What Triumphs of
 Love will the Manifestation of his Love produce!
 What a strong and powerful Operation will there
 be of the Glory and Love of Christ upon the Hearts
 of Believers in Heaven, when they shall clearly see
 that He is the Chiefest among Ten Thousand, and
 in his humane Nature the most glorious Object in
 the created World; the Sum of all Excellency and
 Beauty, and therefore worthy of all their Love, had
 they a Thousand Souls to love Him withal. It is
 impossible but this Sight of Him will overcome
 their Hearts, since they are overcome by an imper-
 fect Sight of him now. 'Tis a strange Expression,
 Cant. vi. 5. *Turn away thine Eyes from me, they have
 overcome me.* And that, Cant. iv. 9. *Thou hast ra-
 vish'd my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse; thou hast ravish'd
 my Heart with one of thine Eyes, with one Chain of thy
 Neck.* The Eyes of the Church being religiously
 fix'd on Christ, did so much delight him, that he
 was almost ravish'd and vanquish'd by 'em, and
 represents Himself as one that must be forc'd to fly
 away either from them or Himself, as Men use to
 do in Trances or violent Passions. Is Christ over-
 come by a Sight of his People's Graces? Well may
 we conceive they shall be overcome by a Sight of
 his Glory. The Love of God and Christ doth de-
 scend to us in an eminent Manner; and when we
 clearly see it, and are sensible of it, will not our
 Love ascend to him? As a View of the Physical
 Attributes of God draws a Reverence from our
 Minds; so a View of his Moral Attributes, his
 Holi-

Holiness, Compassion and Love will draw Love from our Hearts; and the more perfect our View of 'em is, the higher will our Love arise.

(5.) 'Twill be a joyful, transporting, and ravishing Vision. It will create unconceivable Gladness in the Breasts of all who are admitted to it, a *Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. If there be a Joy at the Conversion of a Sinner, what Joy will there be at his Glorification! In the very Thoughts and Hopes of an unseen Saviour create such Joy in the Souls of Believers, what exuberant Joy will a seen and enjoy'd Saviour produce in the heavenly Host? It will certainly be *exceeding Joy*, Jude 24. a Joy that exceeds all carnal *Epicurean* Joy. It exceeds the Joy of a Feast, the Joy of Marriage, the Joy of Harvest, the Joy of Victory. It exceeds all Imagination and Conception. The very Gleanings of celestial Joys are far beyond an Harvest of worldly Delights. The supreme Joy of the Saints (as one observes) is for the Felicity and Glory of God himself; for as the Holy Soul feels no more powerful Motive to love God, than because he is most worthy of it, as he is God, a Being of infinite Excellencies, and therefore to be loved above the dearest Persons or Things; so the highest Joy it partakes of is from this Consideration, that God is infinitely blessed and glorious.

In Heaven the Love of the Saints to God is in its highest Elevation, and they see his Glory in the most perfect Manner, which causeth a transcendent Joy to them; but in Subordination hereunto what Triumphs of Joy will attend the Assurance of their own Blessedness in the Sight of God and Christ, and in a Participation of their Blessedness! Is it Matter of Joy to have Sin pardoned, tho' it remain to disturb us, insomuch that when Christ pronounced the Pardon of his Sin to the Man

sick

sick of the Palsy, *Matth. ix. 2.* he bids him *Be of good Cheer?* How shall we be transported with Joy, when Sin is perfectly abolished, and we shall neither fear the Punishment, nor be annoyed with the Relicts of it! What a ravishing Sight will it be to see these our Enemies drown'd in the Red Sea of our Saviour's precious Blood, and our Souls safely landed upon the Shoar of the heavenly *Canaan!* Was old *Jacob* revived at the Sight of his Son *Joseph*, when he had given him up for dead? Oh how will it revive and exhilarate our Spirits to see the blessed Jesus, who was dead, but is alive, and has more Power in Heaven, than *Joseph* had in the Land of *Egypt*; and greater Affection for us than *Joseph* could have for his own Father! What exuberant Joy will the Soul of a Believer receive in that Day, when she shall be presented before the Seat and Majesty of the blessed Trinity, with a Recital of all her good Works and Travels sustained for the Love and Service of God! Then shall she *enter into the Lord's Joy*, *Mat. xxv. 21.* and the transcendent Excellency of the Objects of our glorified Powers, our Propriety in them, and the everlasting fresh Sense of the Difference between our suffering militant, and our triumphant State; together with the full Assurance of the unchangeable Perpetuity of our future blessed State will all conspire and concur to keep the Spring of Joy for ever flourishing in our Souls.

6.) 'Twill be a satisfying and perfective Vision; for 'twill be intuitive, which is when the Mind directly receiveth the Form of a Thing from it self, and this is most satisfying. And it carries such Satisfaction in it of which the Soul will never be cloy'd and weary.

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The Length of the Enjoyment of the same Objects doth not beget a wearisom Satiety, or lessen the Sweetness of them, because an infinite Good produces always the same pure, equal, compleat Joy, in regard it ariseth from its intrinsick Perfections, that want no Foil to recommend them. 'Tis a great Disparagement to all sublunary Enjoyments, that there's no satisfying Virtue in 'em; therefore we must look higher for our Happiness. But there is a Fulness of Satisfaction resulting from the blessed Sight and Enjoyment of God, to a Soul attemper'd to him. *Here the Ear is not satisfied with hearing, nor the Eye satisfied with seeing; Eccles. i. 8.* Because these Earthly Things have but a scanty limited Goodness in them, not proportionate to the Infinite Desires of our Souls. But the Heavenly Enjoyments being Infinite, tho' there are differing Degrees of Glory, yet every one is so fully content with his own, that there is no possible Desire of being but what he is. It is one of pious Bishop Hall's Meditations, "The Continuance even of the best Things cloyeth and wearieth, there is nothing but thy self wherein there is not Satiety." There is no Satisfaction nor Rest out of the Centre, therefore the Soul is in a continual Motion till it arrive at the full Enjoyment of God, its Centre in perfect Blis; and then 'tis at Rest, and fully satisfied with the divine Likeness, *Psal. xvii. 15. As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy Likeness.* The Sight of the Face of Moses, when Radiant, had no Transforming Efficacy, for the Light of it was not in him as its Source, but by Derivation; but God is Light essentially, and the Sight of his Perfections will be productive of his Likeness in us, so far as it may be in a restrained Subject; and this Likeness will be Satisfying and Perfective of our Souls. For God is a Spiritual Good, suitable to the Nature of Man's

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Man's better and divine Part, and communicates Himself to the Spiritual Faculties, the Understanding and the Will, the Principles of Man's eminent Operations, and the most capable of enjoying Felicity. He is an Infinite Good, and can fully satisfy all our rational Desires. And He is an Unchangeable Good, not to be lost, but may be securely enjoy'd to Eternity. So that in the Knowledge and Love, in the Imitation and Enjoyment of his Excellencies, the highest Elevation and compleat Satisfaction of the rational Nature consists.

7.) 'Twill be a spacious and extensive Vision, extended to all and every one of the Inhabitants of Heaven, and not at all lessen'd or diminish'd by the Number of those who partake of it. The Sight is the most comprehensive Sense, and is sometimes put for all other Senses. The other Senses have a narrower Compass to move in, and are more confin'd, as the Ear is affected only with Sounds; but the Eye derives Refreshment and Delight, not only by the Colours of Objects, but their Figure, Motion and Quantity. Other Senses have their fixed Stations, whereas the Eye can move itself to and fro, and with one Turn can fetch in the whole Compass of the Hemisphere round about you. What a spacious Sight will it be, when the glorified Eye shall take in the whole Circumference of Heaven; and what one sees, will be equally the Object of another's Sight! How much more comprehensive the intellectual Vision? For, as one observes, Heaven is not parted by Lot, as *Canaan* was, that is a Type of it, but comes all unto all, and all to every one. As All enjoy the Light of the Sun, and one sees no less for the Multitude of Spectators that behold it, but Millions may at once have from this Luminary as much Light as they can desire. So God, the Fountain being Infinite, is sufficient

ent to diffuse the benign Rays of his Heavenly Light to all the Inhabitants of the New *Jerusalem*, yea to fill them all, were they Ten thousand Times more in Number than they are, without taking from one to add to another. An Earthly Father can't enlarge the Portion of one of his Children without diminishing another's; but in Heaven there's no Partition or Division; Every Individual Saint, as he was an Heir, so he shall be a Possessor of the whole Patrimony of his Father, and sustain no Loss or Damage, by Reason of the Innumerable Multitude of his Brethren that participate with him. All Creatures in their Fulness and Perfection are not enough for one Soul, so capacious a Being is it; but one God, in the Manifestations of his Glory and Love is sufficient and enough for all Souls; for he is All in All.

8.) 'Tis a Vision peculiar to the Children of God, to those who are at present true Believers: Every single Believer is as much interested in it, as if prepar'd for Him alone; and hence it is that, they shall not only say *our Lord* and *our God*, but *my Lord* and *my God*. Unbelievers shall see Christ too, but 'twill be as a Malefactor at the Bar sees the Judge, when he passeth a Sentence of Death upon him; who being condemn'd, is taken away, the Judge is gone, and he sees him no more. Christ will turn his Back upon the wicked World, and bid them Everlastingly depart; They shall see him no more for ever: But tho' they shall never more behold his Face, the Impressions of his terrible Presence will abide on them, for they will be dismiss'd with a *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. They shall be entertain'd with other kind of Spectacles; They will see the Smoak, Fire and Brimstone of the Internal Lake, Chains and Flames, Despairing Tears, and Gnashing of Teeth, Trembling Joints, and
Ghastly

Ghastly frightful Bodies. Oh! What wou'd these
 abandon'd Miscreants give for one refreshing Sight
 of Jesus Christ! How wou'd they prize one favour-
 able Aspect, one Glance of his reconciled Counte-
 nance! But their Day is past; They rejected
 Christ, and cared not for his Company, and shall
 therefore be eternally banish'd from him. But as
 to Believers, who lov'd and long'd for him here,
 they shall ever dwell in his Presence; ever behold
 his Face, and their Eyes be even feasting upon his
 Beauty and his Glory. And how will it raise the
 Admiration and Thankfulness of the Saints to con-
 sider that they are called out of Crowds and Mul-
 titudes that are passed by, and left to perish in
 their Sins, to be made wonderful Instances of di-
 vine Love, and admitted to such ravishing Views!
 How can they forbear breaking forth into such
 Expressions of their lively Resentments of divine
 Love as these: " Lord, whence is this that thou
 " shou'dst take us undeserving Sinners into such
 " Nearness to thy self, when others antecedently
 " as worthy as we were, are kept at an everlasting
 " Distance! Whence is it that we shou'd be Sing-
 " ing and Shouting with Joy in thy Court, when
 " others are Howling, and Wailing, and Cursing
 " their Day in Hell! That we Strangers of the
 " Gentiles shou'd be bidden to the Marriage-
 " Supper of the Lamb, and made welcome to
 " this Royal Banquet, when the Children of the
 " Kingdom are shut out, and many of 'em shall
 " not taste of thy Supper! How is it, that we
 " are shining in Robes of Glory, when many of
 " our Neighbours are shining in Flames! That
 " we are comforted, and they are tormented! That
 " Grace and Mercy are glorified in our Salvation,
 " while necessary Justice glories over others in their
 " Condemnation!

(9.) 'Twill

9.) 'Twill be a fixed, everlasting Sight, without either Intermiffion or Termination, 1 *Theff.* iv. 17. *Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord.* Oh Eternity, Eternity! No Sting so painful to the Soul in Hell, as the Eternity of their Confinement, that there will never come a Goal-Delivery. No such Ground of Joy in Heaven as the Eternity of their Happiness; The very Thoughts of once quitting which wou'd imbitter all Mortality, is the Disgrace of sublunary Delights, but Immortality is the Glory of the Heavenly Vision. The Drunkard must soon part with his Cups, and the Epicure bid Farewell to his Feasts, and the Worlding to his Wealth and Store. Their Delight will not be courted to make any long Stay with those that love 'em best; The Revolution of a little Time will make a great Change both in us and them. But we shall never come to an End of those Pleasures which are at God's Right Hand: Many live to see an End of all Creature-Perfection, but the Duration of the Heavenly Perfection will never be measur'd out. Our first Paradise had a Way out, but none that ever we cou'd find in again; The Eternal Paradise hath a Way in, but no Way out again. What Sovereign Consolation will this afford the Saints at present, That e're long they'll be in a State where, when Millions of Ages are past, their Glory is but beginning; and when Millions more are past, it is no nearer Ending. Here's an Ocean without Shore or Bottom. 'Tis enough to confound all our Thoughts, and to Non-plus all Arithmetick and Chronology; Almanacks and Calendars are insignificant here. Oh Eternity! How little do we know Thee! How unable are we to measure or comprehend Thee! Yet that your Conception of Eternity may be more distinct and affecting

things, you may make use of such Temporal, resemblances as these. Suppose the vast Ocean were distill'd Drop by Drop, but so slowly that a thousand Years should pass between every Drop, how many Millions of Years would be requir'd to empty it! Or, Suppose this great World in the full Compass of it, from one Pole to another, or from the Top of the Firmament to the Bottom, were to be filled with the smallest Sand, but so slowly that at every thousandth Year only a single Grain should be added, how many Millions would pass away before it were filled! yet this falls short of Eternity, this might be accomplished in Time, but after that Eternity will be entire and unspent still.

Thus have I shown you, that the Saints in Heaven shall be like unto Christ in Knowledge. And since Christ himself will be the most immediate Object of their Knowledge, as the Text intimates in that Expression of *seeing him as he is*, I have laid before you *nine* Properties of our future Knowledge, or mental Vision of Christ.

But besides this, the Saints shall without Question *know each other* in Heaven, since they will resemble Christ in Knowledge, who knows all his particular Sheep. Moreover we read *Mat. viii. 11.* That *many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of God.* This is a Metaphor or an Allusion to Feasts, where Men have Communion one with another, which supposes Acquaintance, or at least an Opportunity of acquiring it. Tho' Strangers may meet together at a Feast, they seldom part Strangers. Nor will any Knowledge cease in Heaven, but what implieth Imperfection, *When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away,* 1 Cor. xiii. 10. It shall be

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done away as the Light of Candles and Stars is done away by the greater Light of the Sun, which is more properly a doing away our Ignorance. Or 'twill be rather a changing our Mode of knowing, than a destroying any Part of our Knowledge. For saith the Apostle, *Henceforth know we no Man after the Flesh*, 2 Cor. v. 16. We shall not know one another by Stature, Voice, Colour, Complexion, Visage, or outward Shape, nor by Parts, and Gifts of Learning, or Titles of Honour and worldly Dignity, nor by Terms of Affinity and Consanguinity, nor probably by Youth, Age, or Sex; but principally by the Image of Christ, and our spiritual Relation, and former Faithfulness in improving Talents; by these beyond doubt we shall both know and be known. Oh happy approaching Day! when our Knowledge will be full, clear and certain, acquired with Ease and Quickness, neither mingled with Doubts, nor attained by painful Studies, and tedious Travel from Truth to Truth; when the glorious Face of Jesus Christ shall be the Scripture, and he himself the Teacher. Here we are gravell'd with many dark Prophecies, and difficult Texts, we are stagger'd with intricate and astonishing Acts of the divine Providence, while we look as thro' a Glass darkly, we can't forbear Complaining: *The Light shineth upon our Darknes, and our Darknes comprehendeth it not.* But when Death hath blown the Dust out of our Eyes, and filled us with the Light of Life, we shall have a Key to unlock the most abstruse Prophecy: And all the puzzling Difficulties of Scripture, and the mysterious Passages of divine Providence, that seem'd to us once to clash and contradict one another, shall appear to our glorified Eye in great Clearness, and entire Harmony and Agreement. And how Blessed will this Sight be! To have at once a clear View of all

all Divine Truths in their beautiful Connexion and Dependance one upon another, and their Union in Christ: To have the whole System of Divine Providence in its Accomplishment and Perfection presented to us, and the secret Springs of its several knotty Branches made manifest; how will such a Sight exalt our Admiration of the Divine Power, Wisdom and Love!

As, with respect to their Souls, Believers will be like Christ in Knowledge, so

(2.) In Sanctity or Holiness. To the Illustration of the Mind there will be correspondent Impressions upon the Heart and Will. The Holiness of God is his Love of himself. The Holiness of Christ is the Love of his Father. Our Holiness is the Separation of our selves to God through Christ by Love. In our primitive State we were created after the Image of God, and separated to him by Holiness; but Sin hath defac'd this Image of God, and separated us from him; and to be void of this Image, is our great Infelicity and Misery, as well as our Sin. Now when God recovers us out of our sinful miserable State in our Conversion, he re-imprints his Image of Holiness upon us, and thereby begins the Heavenly Felicity in us. For, as one hath observ'd, "Holiness is not only necessary as an Evidence of our Interest in the Relative Privileges of the Covenant, as Pardon and Adoption; nor only by way of Gratitude for Salvation receiv'd, but as a Part of Salvation itself, and a Means to obtain the rest." Yea, so necessary to our future Happiness is our Likeness to Jesus Christ in Holiness, that Pardon of Sin without this cou'd not make us happy. 'Tis a Thing impossible, a Contradiction, for a Man to be forgiven and sav'd who remains unhoiy. If you knew what Sin is, you

Dr. Manton.

wou'd know that 'tis a Self-Punishment, the sorest Evil, the Sicknefs and Misery of the Soul ; and to forgive a Man, is to deliver him from this Misery ; and to save him, is to save him from his Sin. Holiness is the Soul's Medicine, its Health, and its eternal Happiness. As Christ is a Lamb without Spot and Blemish, so there will be no Spot of Sin to stain the Purity of his Members in Heaven. No Wrinkle or Blemish, or any such Thing, shall be seen upon the Face of the Bride, when she shall be brought Home to her Bridegrooms House. This might be illustrated from the Course of Preparatory Purification those Virgins were to go through, who were presented to the Choice of Heathen Princes. *Esth. ii. 12.* A Course of Preparatory Holiness, under Gospel-Ministrations, must dispose sinful Souls for the Presence and Acceptance of the King of Kings. For this is the Method of our Happiness, the free Love of God doth first purify us from Sin, and make us holy, and then he loves his own Image of Holiness in us, being pleas'd to see us so like Himself. There are some Draughts and Lineaments of this Image upon us here, but they shall be filled up and compleated in the future Life for the Soul, as soon as 'tis got above these lower Regions, puts off its filthy Garments, together with the Body, and leaves them behind it, and never thenceforth mingleth it self with any thing below it self, but is eternally employ'd in loving and praising God, and lives in the closest Adhesion to him. And they are not only holy in their Disposition and Hallelujahs, but are confirm'd in a State of Holiness, so that they will sin no more.

Here they can say they wou'd not sin against God but hereafter they shall be able to say farther, that they are assur'd they never shall sin against him more. And in this respect they bear a Resemblance

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Christ, who as he cannot sin against his God and Father, so he will sanctify the Faculties of his Members in Heaven to that degree, that they can't obtain of themselves to do any thing that shall ever offend the same God.

(3.) In Blessedness. Jesus Christ became like unto us in his State of Humiliation, that he might make Believers like to Himself in his State of Exaltation. Christ is the Fountain and Pattern not only of our Holiness, but of our Blessedness. *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and joynt Heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together,* Rom. viii. 17. We were not capable of being joynt Purchasers with Christ of the Heavenly Inheritance; but such is his Condescension and his Love, he will admit us to be joynt Heirs, and joynt Possessors with him of this same Inheritance that he alone purchased. And though our Way to it may be through the Cross, and many Afflictions and Sufferings, yet that which may alleviate and sweeten them to us, is, that we have Christ for our Companion in them; and much more that he will at length take us up to be his Fellows and Companions in everlasting Glory. We shall be glorified together with him; we shall partake of the same Glory in which Christ our Head shines, and be blessed with the same kind of Blessedness wherewith he Himself is blessed. Is Christ a King and Priest? He will make all his Members *Kings and Priests too unto God and his Father,* Rev. i. 6. Kings to rule over the Devil, the World and the Flesh; and Priests to offer up to God the *Personal Sacrifice* of themselves, and the *Verbal Sacrifice* of Praise and Thanksgiving. 'Tis a very high Expression of Dignity which we meet with in *Matth. xix. 28. Ye which have followed me in the Regeneration; when the Son of Man shall sit on the Throne of his Glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve*

Tribes of Israel. What Honour is here! not to stand as others to be judged, but to sit as Judges. Tho' this may import some Honour peculiar to the twelve Apostles, yet we are not to exclude others from the Honour mention'd in the Text, taken in a larger Sense. The lowest Degree of heavenly Honour carrieth in it a Likeness to Christ, and is infinitely above the highest Step of Earthly Preferment and Glory.

2. I'm in the next Place to shew you how the Sons of God shall be like Christ, with respect to their *Bodies*. This Part of their Likeness to Christ lies in these Qualities.

- (1.) In Immortality.
- (2.) In the Indissolubleness of the Union there will be between their Souls and Bodies.
- (3.) In Beauty.
- (4.) In Strength and Activity.
- (5.) In Spirituality.

(1.) In Immortality. Christ being true and perfect Man, hath a real substantial Body, in which he died; but he rose again, and so, tho' he was once dead, yet is alive, and ever liveth to make Intercession for us, *Rev. ii. 8.* and *Heb. vii. 25.* Now *Christ being raised from the Dead, dieth no more; Death hath no more Dominion over him, Rom. vi. 9.* Christ by Death hath fully discharg'd our Debts, and therefore is not liable to the Arrest of another Death; yea, he therefore died, that he might destroy Death both in Himself and his Members. Now as Christ our Head rose again, never to die more, so at length he will raise the Bodies of his Members never to die more, that *as they have been planted together with him in the Likeness of his Death,*

So they may be also in the Likeness of his Resurrection,
 Rom. vi. 5. This is true in a literal, as well as in
 a metaphorical Sense. I apprehend the Text prin-
 cipally regards the Soul, its dying unto Sin, and
 living unto God, in Conformity to Christ's Death
 and Resurrection: But this Likeness extends to the
 Body as well as the Spirit; for as the Body of
 Christ arose to inherit a blessed Immortality, so he
 will raise and immortalize the Bodies of his Saints,
 that they may live together with him, for because
 he liveth, we shall live also. As his Resurrection
 from the Dead is the Cause of ours, so is his Im-
 mortality the Cause of ours; If Christ lived not to
 make Intercession for us, and to support our re-
 newed Life, it wou'd soon expire and frustrate our
 Hopes. He is *the Resurrection and the Life*, as he
 told *Martha* when under Concern for the Death of
 her Brother *Lazarus*, John xi. 25. He is not only
 the Efficient, but the Exemplary Cause of the Re-
 surrection and Life of Believers; His Members
 shall not only be rais'd and live by him, but they
 shall be rais'd, and live like him, 1 Cor. xv. 53.
For this Corruptible must put on Incorruption, and this
Mortal must put on Immortality; Then shall Death be
swallowed up in Victory, and Mortality shall be swallowed
up in Life. And the Saints being got above the
 Reach of Death, shall sing their *Epinicia*, their
 Triumphant Songs in the Sense of their Victory,
Oh Death, where is thy Sting! Oh Grave, where is thy
Victory! Incorruptibleness is an inseparable Pro-
 perty of glorified Bodies; They will be raised sound,
 and subject to no Disease that may threaten a Se-
 cond Dissolution. The King of Terrors shall ne-
 ver again quarter in their Habitations, or recover
 their Bodies into his Possession. Here their Lives
 are subject to Bondage through Fear of Him, but
 after the Resurrection they shall rejoyce in the
 Assurance of a perpetual Freedom, not only from

his Sting and Stroke, but from any Dread of his Approach. *Jonah* was rais'd but from a Three-Days Burial in the Belly of the Whale in the deep Ocean, and rais'd still liable to Corruption; but we shall be rais'd from many Years Rottenness and Dust, and that Dust shall be exalted to a Sun-like Glory, and that Glory be perpetuated to Eternity. Immortality is one of the richest Jewels in the Saints Crown; and in this they shall resemble Christ.

(2.) In the Indissolubleness of the Union between their glorified Souls and Bodies. Tho' the Body of Christ was for our Sins separated from his Soul and laid in a Sepulchre, yet on the third Day God rais'd him from the Dead, having loosed the Pains of Death, because it was not possible he shou'd be holden of it, Acts ii. 24. And he now remaineth a Priest forever, being made so not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life, Heb. vii. 16. Hence we may infer the Inseparability of his Humane Soul and Body, and of the Humane from the Divine Nature, in regard the Eternity of his Priesthood depends upon the Continuance of both these Unions. So the Union at the Resurrection between those long parted Friends, the Souls and Bodies of the Saints, shall never be dissolv'd or broken, but abideth for ever. The Conjugal Union will cease then, for there will be no Marrying, or giving in Marriage; we shall be as the Angels of God, and know one another no more after the Flesh. Moral Unions in sinful Confederation will be all broke. Artificial Unions will end in the general Fire, but the Union that shall be made at the Resurrection, between the Souls and Bodies of Believers, shall have the Preheminence of all other Unions in this, that it shall never end.

(3.) In Beauty and Glory, Brightness and Splendor. *Who shall change our vile Body, that it may be fashion'd like unto his glorious Body, according to the Working whereby he is able even to subdue all Things unto Himself, Phil. iii. 21.* We learn from this Text both the present and future State of the Bodies of Believers. Here their Bodies are vile, near akin to Corruption; we dwell in Houses of Clay, and smell Rank of the Earth from whence we were taken, and by several Gradations of noisome Distempers and Infirmities are brought down to it. But in the Future State they shall be conform'd to the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ their Head. Look what a Body for Brightness and Glory Jesus Christ hath, such Bodies shall his Members have. Now such is the Lustre and Beauty of Christ's Body, that the Sun in its Meridian Brightness is not to be compared with it. When St. Paul was telling a King of Christ's Appearance to him at his Conversion, he says he *saw in the Way a Light from Heaven above the Brightness of the Sun, shining round about him, Acts xxvi. 13.* The Sun is the most glorious Creature we ever saw, yet the Glory of the Body of Christ as far exceeds the Glory of the Sun, as the Glory of the Sun exceeds the Twinkling of a Candle. Now the Bodies of Believers shall be like this glorious Body of Jesus Christ in Glory. Such a Lustre will Christ put upon 'em at the Resurrection, that they shall shine as the Sun in the Firmament, *Matth. xv. 43. Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.* Yea, saith St. Austin, the Brightness of the glorified Body shall as much excell the Sun, as the Sun doth in Brightness excell our Bodies." Our Bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and he will not let his Temple always be hid in the Dust and Rubbish, but will build it again, and beautify it, and make it far more illustrious than

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it was here ; even as the latter Temple of *Jerusalem* had greater Glory than the former. Our Bodies in the second Impression will be of a faire Print, free from Blots and Blurs, gilt and flourish'd wherein we shall read more famous Characters of Power and Love. In this Life the Body is under many Marks of Sin, that both afflict and deform it; 'Tis liable to many Diseases, Crookedness, Dislocations of Bones, Excrescencies and other Accidents that are its Disparagement, and mar its Comeliness : And if it escape these, yet the Wrinkles of Old Age do at length wither its Beauty ; but in the Resurrection Christ will free it from all the Injuries and Effects of Sin, and put upon it such a transcendent and undecaying Beauty, as neither Nature nor Art can match or parallel ; for they shall be fashion'd like unto the glorious Body of the Lord Jesus.

(4.) In Strength and Activity. Here 'tis a weak and crazy Body, clogg'd with those gross Humours that make it weak and heavy. Besides, many die in Infancy before they arrive at their full Strength, whilst others are made decrepit by Old Age, and survive their Strength. But in the Resurrection all the Bodies of Believers shall arrive at Perfection. There shall be no more an Infant of Days, nor an Old Man. Our blessed Saviour died and rose again, and ascended into Heaven, when his Body was in its full Strength, about the 33d Year of his Age. And we may gather from hence what the Apostle asserts in 1 Cor. xv. 43. *It is sown in Weakness, it is rais'd in Power or Strength.* It appears plainly enough that the Bodies of the Saints in the present State are frail and weak, and so weak that they can't subsist a few Days without the Support of the Creatures ; but how strong, sprightly, and healthful must they be, when they shall continue everlastingly without Meat and Drink, or any other

Helps,

Jerusalem, without which this frail Life can't keep it
 our Bodies from Corruption? *Physicians* and *Natural Phi-*
sophers will tell you that the Body here is in a con-
 tinual Flux, some Parts are always flying off by
 Transpiration, which are supplied by the Accession
 of new Parts from the Nourishment we take. Na-
 ture is constantly employ'd in generating new Blood,
 Spirits, and new Particles of Flesh to recruit her
 Stock, without which she wou'd soon languish.
 But in the Resurrection our Bodies will be sup-
 ported in their full Strength, Stature and Vigour
 by the Power of God in an Incorruptible Life.
 God will do that eminently Himself for us, in an
 immediate Way, which he did in a lower Degree
 before by the Use and Ministry of the Creatures.
 For the Illustration of this, see 2 Cor. xiii. 4. *Tho'*
he was crucified through Weakness, yet he liveth by the
Power of God: For we also are weak in him, or with
him, but we shall live with him by the Power of God
toward you. First we bear the Image of a crucified
 Christ in our Weakness, Contempt and Persecuti-
 ons; and then we bear the Image of a living Christ
 in the immortal Life hereafter, which shall be
 maintain'd by that Power of God which raised
 Christ from the Dead. Tho' the Text, in its direct
 Sense, seems to regard the Powerful Effects of the
 Apostles Ministry, whereby it appear'd that the
 Apostles were strong and powerful, like a living
 powerful Saviour.

(5.) In Spirituality, 1 Cor. xv. 44. *It is sown a Na-*
tural Body, it is rais'd a Spiritual Body. By a *Spi-*
ritual Body we are not to understand that the Body
 at the Resurrection shall be transform'd into an
 immaterial Spirit, for then there wou'd be no Body,
 nor any Distinction between Soul and Body, and
 then how cou'd we in our Bodies partake of the
 Heavenly Glory? But there shall be a greater
 Affinity or Nearness to the Nature and Properties
 of

of a Spirit in the Qualities or Properties of the glorified Body; and also a full and entire Subjection of the Body to the perfected Spirit, without any Reluctance or Dislike. Or, it may refer to the more full Inhabitation of the Virtue and Vigour of God's Spirit in our Bodies, quickning and forever sustaining them without any Assistance of the Animal Faculties. So that the Body shall only in some of its Qualities, resemble a Spirit; it shall be strong and vivid, brisk and active, quick and subtle, pure and sublime like a Spirit. All the feculent earthly Parts that indispos'd it for Spiritual Operations shall be separated from it, and it shall be refin'd and made fitter for Spiritual Work, and be a Help, and not an Hindrance to the Spirit's Operations. As St. *Austin* saith, *Sicut Spiritus carni serviens non incongruè carnalis, ita caro Spiritui serviens rectè appellatur spiritualis*. "Like as the Spirit serving the Flesh is not unaptly call'd Carnal; so the Flesh serving the Spirit, is rightly call'd Spiritual."

Now the more Spiritual the Body is, the like it is to Christ, who will be to it a quickning Spirit. Jesus Christ, the Head of the Elect, is ordain'd of God to be the Fountain and Author of a Spiritual and Eternal Life, by the Communication of his Spirit, which restoreth Life unto the Dead, and conserveth it in them perpetually. As he now, since his Resurrection, hath a Spiritual Body Himself, so shall he give the like Bodies to all such as descend from him by a Spiritual Regeneration. For each *Adam* doth communicate to his Off-spring, the One by Nature, the other by Grace, that which he hath of his own.

Thus having shewed you in what Respects the Saints in the Future State shall be like Christ; I proceed in the next Place to assign some REASONS of the Point, which are of two Sorts.

I. Wh

1. Why our future Happiness is placed partly in a Resemblance of Christ.
2. Why the Apostle placeth it partly in *seeing him as he is*.

1. Why is our future Happiness placed partly in a Resemblance of Christ ?

(1.) Because Jesus Christ, who is the Purchaser of our Happiness, is the Pattern of it. Like as Jesus Christ is the Pattern of our Holiness, so he will be also of our Happiness. If we be Holy, as he was Holy, we shall certainly be Happy, as he is Happy; that is, with a Happiness of the same Kind, tho' it fall short in Degree. For as the Happiness of Christ lies in perfectly Knowing, perfectly Loving, and perfectly Enjoying his Father and Himself; so our Happiness shall lie in perfectly Knowing, Loving and Enjoying the Father and Him.

(2.) Because we receive our Happiness by Participation from him. The Spring of our Happiness is not in our selves, but in him, and we have it by Derivation from him. As at present of his Fulness of Grace we receive Grace for Grace, so hereafter of his Fulness of Glory shall we receive Glory for Glory. 'Tis probable, that as Christ was on Earth a Mediator of Redemption, so in Heaven he will be a Mediator of Fruition, through whom the Heavenly Glory will be communicated to us.

2. Why doth the Apostle place our Happiness partly in seeing Christ as he is?

(1.) For Distinction. To distinguish it from

1.) The Sight of him they had, who saw him in the Flesh ; which is a Distinction as to the Object.

2.) To distinguish it from the Sight of him they have who see him by Faith ; which is a Distinction as to the Mode or Way of seeing him.

1.) To

1.) To distinguish our future Sight of Christ from that Sight of him they had who saw him in the Flesh, which is a Distinction as to the Object. We shall see him *as he is*, that is, in his State of Exaltation and Glory; not as he was in the Form of a Servant in his State of Humiliation. And this Sight of Christ will be an Answer to Christ's Prayer to his Father, *John xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory, which thou hast given me.* We shall not see Christ suffering Reproach and the Contradiction of Sinners against himself. We shall not see him arraign'd, judg'd, condemn'd, number'd with Transgressors, and crucify'd with Malefactors: We shall not see him as a Prisoner at the Bar, but a Judge upon his Bench, judging and condemning his Enemies, that wou'd not that he shou'd reign over them: We shall not see him riding upon an Ass, but sitting as King upon his Throne, triumphing over Principalities and Powers: We shall not see him derided, mocked, spit upon as a Worm, and no Man, but as a conquering glorious Prince dragging his Enemies at his Chariot-Wheels, leading Captivity captive, admired by his Saints, and magnified in them that believe. We shall see him as he is the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, upholding all Things by the Word of his Power, and sitting down on the Right-Hand of the Majesty on high: We shall see that he is highly exalted, and has a Name above every Name, and all the Angels of God worshipping him, and every Knee bowing to him both of Things in Heaven, and Things on Earth, and Things under the Earth: We shall see his Enemies tremble before him, his Saints rejoycing in him, and making his Praise glorious.

2.) To

2.) To distinguish it from the Sight of him they have who see him by Faith; which is a Distinction as to the Mode of seeing him. There's nothing above Faith in this World, but in Heaven Faith, considered as a means, is swallow'd up in Possession. The Sight on Earth is nothing in Comparison with the Sight they shall have at his Appearance, when he will express himself in Fulness of Love and Glory to his Members. Both the vast Distance that lies between the Eye of Faith and the Objects of it, and the Darkeness of the Subject, in which the Eye of Faith is planted, doth much obstruct our Sight; but when this Distance and Darkeness is removed, and we shall be brought into a State of Nearness to those glorious Objects, which before we only saw afar off, and by an imperfect Light, how clear and satisfying will our View of 'em be! The Life of Faith, I confess, more noble than the Life of corporal Sense, but 'tis far inferior to the Life of Glory. For in two Respects the Heavenly Vision differs from and exceeds the Sight of Faith.

[1.] 'Tis intuitive, that is, the Mind directly receiveth the Form of the Thing from it self. The Sight of Faith is like seeing a Thing in a Glass, which we see only at second Hand, and by an imperfect Representation. But the Sight of Glory is a direct beholding the Objects themselves, which gives us more perfect Conceptions and Apprehensions of 'em, than the Mind hath or can have by any Historical Narration or a Relation of them by which Faith judgeth of 'em.

[2.] 'Tis experimental, a Sight of Experience. A natural Philosopher has a differing Knowledge of Honey by the Taste of it, from what he could have from a Speculation only. Travelling in a foreign Country gives a Man Ideas of it very differing from what barely looking on the Map of it will

will afford him. So all Representations and Discoveries of the Heavenly World, by Reports and Words, fall infinitely short of an Experience of the Enjoyment of that World.

The Apostle makes our future Happiness to lie in seeing Christ as he is,

(2.) For Exaltation, to enhance the Price and Value of it in our Thoughts. And this doth appear,

1.) From the Object seen, for the Excellency of the Object enobles the Sight. Now, tho' I do not apprehend that we shall see the Essence of God, no doubt we shall see the most perfect Manifestations of his Glory and Love; but the divine manifestative Glory is a created Glory; and if it be a created Glory, 'tis probable that 'tis the Perfection of the whole Universe, for this is the greatest created Glory of God; the whole containing all the Parts and their Perfections in itself, and the Glory of the most excellent Part is less than the Glory of the Whole. Jesus Christ himself, as a Man is a Part yet the most excellent Part of the Universe; therefore his Glory, as Man, is less than the Glory of the Whole; and the same may we say of the Glory of the Heavens. 'Tis probable therefore that the Glory of the finite World is understood and seen by some finite Understanding; that Angels have some Acquaintance with the Fabrick of the whole World; and that God doth not impress his Image upon his Creatures, and adorn the World with his Glory, to be seen and understood only by Himself. Now the Souls of Believers shall be Partakers of this Angelical Blessedness, *Luke xx. 36.* Tho', according to their differing Capacities there will be differing Degrees of this Knowledge, and consequently differing Degrees of Love and Joy. But amongst all the Works of God, the Glory of the divine

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Divine Perfections shine no where so clearly, as in the glorified Person of Jesus Christ the Mediator; therefore 'tis not improbable that to behold this Glory of Christ in the Heavens, together with his glorified Body, I mean his Church triumphant, will be the chief Part of the future Glory and Blessedness of the Saints.

2.) From the Organ by which we shall see Christ; and that is a glorified Eye acting in a glorified Body, acted by a glorified Spirit; and 'twill be the same Eye we now see with, *Job xix. 27. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another.* It shall be the same Eye for Substance, but new modified and invigorated. Now the Eye is not able to look on the Sun in its Glory, but hereafter this Organ will be enabled not only to take a View of more Objects, and more glorious ones than the Sun itself, but to look on 'em without Difficulty, and with full Contentment and Delight; yea not only to look, but to live upon them. And what sweet and powerful Impressions will the Heavenly Objects make upon us, when they shall be taken in by a glorified Eye that can penetrate into their Worth and Excellency, as well as see their Brightness and Glory. I might add, That the Glory of God the Father shall be seen through Jesus Christ the Mediator, which shou'd exalt the Value of the Beatifick Vision in our Esteem. As God brought us Home to Himself by Christ, so he will hereafter through Christ give forth Himself to us.

The Application.

Let me exhort and persuade you to seek this Blessedness of the Sons of God, that lies in a Likeness to Christ, and in seeing him as he is, which

is to be done by your giving all Diligence to be made Partakers of those Dispositions and Qualifications of Mind and Life, that will prepare and fit you for it.

And I shall press upon you this Exhortation with the following Motives.

1. There is as great a Moral Certainty of a blessed State remaining as can rationally be expected. It hath such Evidence as an Object of Faith is capable of. Every Creature informs us there is a God; and if God be, he is Wise, Holy, and Just, and is obliged by the Perfection of his own Nature, and a Regard to his own Glory as Governour of the World, to call Men to an Account, and as Judge to dispense proper Rewards and Punishments.

But to lay before you a few Arguments for the Existence of a State of future Blessedness.

(1.) If there was not a State of Blessedness for the Godly after this Life, then Men are made in vain, or at least to very little Purpose, for there's no arriving at the chief End of his Creation in this Life. 'Tis impossible for Man to be happy according to the Worth and Excellency of his Nature in the Enjoyments of this World. The Fore-knowledge of Death, without any other Allay, is enough to embitter any Happiness that must end in it; and in some Sense a Beast wou'd be more Happy than a Man, for it knoweth not that it must die.

But is it likely that God, who makes not the least Creature in vain, shou'd make Man, so excellent a Creature in vain? Is it likely he shou'd employ his Almighty Power and Infinite Wisdom in making a Being capable of doing him perpetual Honour, for the meer momentary Business of Life? Is it not more likely to be his Intention to join him to those spiritual Natures, that shall attend him for ever?

Or

Or is it probable a Beast shou'd be more happy than a Man? If it had been the End of our Creation to eat and drink, to sleep and play, and converse with sensual Objects, worse Souls wou'd have serv'd for these Purposes than those that God has given us. The Sum is, that the very Excellency of the human Faculties, especially that whereby Man hath a Prospect and considerate Anticipation of Death, renders the Good of Sense less good, delightful and pleasant to him than to the very Beasts; which is a strong moral Evidence that there is an immortal Soul in Man, for which an Immortal Good is reserv'd, because it seems not suitable to the divine Wisdom and Oeconomy, that the Brutes shou'd have a greater Felicity than Man; yet so it must be if the Object of Man's Fruition was only a sensible Good, and after Death nothing was to be expected.

(2.) God's Love to his Friends proves the Existence of the future Blessedness. Were there no such State, his Love wou'd cease to Act before they ceas'd to be; and he wou'd seem to remain in Debt to some of his Friends, I mean the *Martyrs*. I make it out thus: The holy Martyrs, out of a fervent Love to God, laid down their Lives for him, when they might have sav'd them; and so witnessed, they loved God to the Death. Now if God did not love 'em beyond Death and the Grave, and express his Love in advancing them to a State of perfect Happiness, his Love wou'd cease before theirs, and he wou'd seem to be a Debtor to them. But the Love of God is Everlasting, and therefore the Saints, and especially the Martyrs shall have a sweet Sense of it to Eternity. He who is Love it self can't be behind his Creatures in Point of Love.

(3.) The Fore-tastes of this Blessedness, and the Effects of the Belief of it are a Conviction of its Existence. 'Twas this that supported the Martyrs

under extreme Sufferings, and fill'd their Mouths with Songs of Praise: Which natural Force and Vigour, a Generosity of Spirit, or Obstinacy of Mind cou'd not have done. 'Twas this that made 'em despise the Vanities of the lower World. Their Hopes of this blessed State of Immortality weigh'd more with them, than Crowns and Scepters, Money and Lands. Now how hard and unreasonable is it to make all the Heroick Actions of the Martyrs, their noble Contempt of the World, their Manly Refusals of Deliverance on sinful Terms, their cheerful Embracing the Stake, and their insuperable Courage and Patience under all the Outrages of implacable Enemies: I say, how unreasonable is it to make all these the Effects of Delusion, or the Workings of a distemper'd Fancy! They must be the Exercises and Effects of Faith, and that Faith must have an Object suitable to it; Otherwise had their Hope in Christ only in this Life, they wou'd be all Men most miserable.

(4.) If there was no State of Blessedness after this Life, it wou'd follow that the natural Desires of the Soul of Man wou'd be frustrate, namely the Desire of Perfection and Happiness, in a Freedom from Misery, and a Possession of substantial and eternal Good. Which Desires being not Sinful, but Innocent ones, and formed by the Author of Nature, who doth nothing in vain; They will certainly be fulfill'd, upon due Qualifications, if Men don't frustrate themselves, by refusing the highest Good, and taking up with inferior Things. But there is nothing to content these Desires to be found on Earth, it must be therefore sought in Heaven. They can't be fulfill'd in this Life, therefore they must in a future Life.

(5.) The Governing Justice of God requireth that there be a future Life of Retribution; for as it becometh God to punish the Bad, so also to reward

the Good ; but if God do not this in another Life, he never doth it ; for in this Life the Wicked often flourish, while the Just are afflicted, *Pf. xxxvii. 35.* Therefore as God is Just, there remaineth another life, wherein the Souls of the Faithful are rewarded for Well-doing.

(6.) The God of Truth wou'd never use a Lye as a Motive to excite us to religious Duties ; but nothing is more clear than that God doth make use of the Hope of a blessed Immortality to set Men on Work in their Duty ; and if there was no such State, then the Business of Religion wou'd be carried on by a Falsehood. This wou'd subvert the whole Fabrick of Christianity, make God a Liar, and the Gospel a Piece of Imposture. But if God and the Gospel be true, it is true also that there is a State of Happiness on the other side Death, which justifies all the Saints Hopes, and their Labour, Pains and Hardships, and Sufferings in order to obtain a Part in it.

(7.) I may safely say, to the Honour of God's Grace and Infinite Mercy, that according to our Conceptions, God wou'd not be happy, if he did not make them happy also whom he loves ; for then he wou'd not have his Will, which is that they whom he loves shou'd be happy with him.

By these Arguments is the Certainty of the future Blessedness prov'd. So that I am not stirring you up to labour for that which is not, or to take Pains for an Imaginary Happiness ; but for that which is as certain and real as it is great and glorious. If we be deceived in believing another State of Happiness for the Godly, I dread not to aver that God Himself hath deceived us, and that be far from the true and faithful God.

2. This future Blessedness is abundantly worth all your Diligence and Endeayours. If we

cou'd speak with those perfected Spirits that are arriv'd at it, they wou'd certainly tell us so; and had they their Lives to live over again, wou'd double their Diligence, and act at an higher Rate of Vigor and Zeal to ensure a Title and Possession of it, than they did before. Do not they wonder at themselves they shou'd do no more for it, move no faster towards it, wrestle no harder for it, live no more in the believing Thoughts and delightful Contemplations of it? Oh our Stupidity, Ignorance, Enmity to our own eternal Welfare, that we shou'd need Incentives to quicken us to pursue our own Happiness! That Men who have immortal Souls to provide for, shou'd act at so sluggish a Rate, as if endless Blessedness with God had no Attractives in it! I own it is not manifest what we shall be; Words are not Means of an Extent large enough to convey to the Understanding what the Sight of the future Glory will do, they give us only some superficial Hints of Things. Yet we can say enough, if ye will be faithful to yourselves, to draw forth your utmost Endeavours, and to engage all your Care and Diligence to obtain this Glory.

To this End let me give you a Sketch of the Greatness of the future Blessedness; and the Greatness thereof will in some Measure appear by the following Particulars.

(1.) This sensible World is enrich'd by God with a great Variety of good Things made for our Benefit and Comfort. There are innumerable more than are necessary for our Support, which are therefore made for our Delight. And have we not then Reason to think that the Effects of God's Love in Heaven, that divine World, will be far more glorious! Especially when we see so many good Things are given to God's Enemies; and that those given to his Friends, are but Fore-tastes and Pledges of what he has laid up and prepared for 'em: Prepared

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to show the Magnificence of his Love, not our Merits, but his own infinite Bounty. If God maintain his Enemies with so much Cost; If those that hate him fare so well, and are entertain'd with Corn and Wine, and all the Rarities of Nature, and the Quintessence of the Creature; How rich are the Preparations God hath made for his Friends? and how shall those be entertain'd who love him, and are beloved by him, whom he hath set as a Signet on his Arm, and engraven on the Palms of his Hands? Are they cloathed and fed, and that with the finest of the Wheat, who despise the Riches of God's Goodness, and abuse his Gifts and Blessings, are such as these planted in the midst of plenty? Do they *wax fat and shine*? Jer. v. 28. Do the Tabernacles of Robbers prosper? Are they that provoke God secure, into whose Hands God bringeth abundantly? How much more plentifully shall they be fed with *hidden Manna*; how much more resplendently shall they shine in the Glory of their Father, who spent their Days in admiring, raising, and glorifying him for the Riches of his Goodness? Doth *Dives*, a covetous Muck-worm, be deliciously every Day, whilst poor *Lazarus* is begging at his Door for Alms, and glad to be a fellow-Commoner with the Dogs, that lick up the crumbs that fall from their Master's Table? How shall they fare who willingly renounce the Pomp and Vanities of the World, and forego the Profits and Pleasures of it for the Love of God, and the hopes of a better?

(2.) Consider who is the Author and Bestower of his Blessedness, and it is God, which is an Argument of its Greatness: For God always acts like himself, especially where he intends to display his royal State and Munificence. If a Prince make a Feast as *Ahasuerus* did, to show the Riches of his Kingdom, and the Honour of his Majesty, it will

be exceeding costly, plentiful and splendid, according to the State of a King. As a Man is, so is his Strength, and so he acts. If God set himself to make a Creature Happy, that Happiness must be great, answerable to his own Greatness. God rewards his faithful Servants, not according to the Dignity of their Works, but his own Liberality. As *Alexander* having order'd fifty Talents of Gold to be given to a Gentleman in Poverty to supply his Wants: He, surpriz'd with that immense Bounty, modestly said, "Ten were enough." To whom *Alexander* reply'd, "If Fifty are too much for you, to receive, Ten are too little for me to give, therefore do you receive as Poor; I will give as a King." Thus God, in dispensing his Favours, doth not respect the Meanness of our Person or Services, but gives to us as a God. 'Tis said, *Heb. xi. 16. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, his People's God, for he hath prepared for 'em a City.* 'Tis a very high and emphatical Expression: It intimates, that the Portion God hath provided in Heaven for holy Souls is every Way so full and great, that there is no Reason upon that Account that God shou'd disown his Relation to 'em as their God and Father. Which Relation he wou'd be ashamed of, if he had not made suitable Preparations for 'em. Such is the Heavenly Glory in which the believing Patriarchs liv'd after Death, that God took it to be no way unbeseeming his Majesty to be called their God.

(3.) This Portion of the Saints was prepar'd in God's eternal Counsel *before the Foundation of the World was laid, Mat. xxv. 34.* The first Work that God did was to make that Place, that City, that Kingdom, whereof Himself is Builder, for the Entertainment of his People. Now judge ye, Christians, must it not be worth your while to seek that blessed Place and State that the Father, Son, and

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spirit have been contriving from Eternity? Must not one of the noblest Effects of infinite Wisdom, Power and Love be something unconceivably Great and Good? Heaven is not given in Haste, and undesignedly, as an Alms to a Beggar, which is oft of small Value; but 'tis design'd and prepar'd in the Decree of the great God from Eternity, and that is one of the richest Tokens of his Love to the Elect. Of what a valuable Nature is that which requir'd an eternal Decree, and so long a Preparation of the All-wise and great Architect?

(4.) We may measure the Glory of Heaven by the Price of it, what it cost, and that was our blessed Saviour's most precious Blood. It comes freely to us, but Christ dearly redeem'd it from the Mortgage that lay upon it. Now the Inheritance purchas'd must bear some Proportion to the Price. On the Negative the Apostle tells us, *1 Pet. i. 18, 19.* what we were not redeemed with, *Not with Silver and Gold*, the Price of Earthly Estates; but positively with an higher Price, even *the Blood of Christ*; Now what Difference there is in the Price, such a Difference is there in the several Estates purchas'd by 'em. As much as the Blood of Christ exceeds in value Silver and Gold, so much doth our Inheritance in Heaven exceed in Richness the best Inheritances on Earth. *Canaan* that flow'd with Milk and Honey was a Type of Heaven; but the Heavenly Country typified thereby, doth as far transcend the Type in Excellency, as the Substance doth surpass a Shadow, or a living Man the dead *Effigies* of him. Wou'd Jesus Christ shed his Blood in vain, or for some trifling Consideration? Wou'd he die for a Worthless Thing? And if Heaven was worth the Blood of a Saviour, shall we not deem it worth the Breath and Pains of Sinners?

(5.) As

(5.) As the *Purchase*, so the *Promise* of Heaven speaks it to be a great and excellent Enjoyment; for a Promise supposeth the Matter of the Promise to be a real Good, and a Promise made solemnly, and made to animate Men to encounter great Difficulties and Dangers must be of some great Good. As one saith, "God, at the Mediation of Christ, enters into Bond, in the Sight and Presence of Angels, to his Beloved ones, that he will give them what will make 'em blessed." This Solemnity in the Transaction, and his taking Time for Payment, shews that the Things promis'd are exceeding great and precious. God has appointed a special Day for conferring these Rewards, which signifies they'll be worthy of God, and will deserve the Attention, Regard and Patience of the whole World.

(6.) If the Happiness of Heaven was less great and good than it is, it wou'd not satisfy us. Our Desires are of a vast Capacity; and if our Portion were not answerably Great, there wou'd be no Satisfaction, for Satisfaction results from proportioned Suitableness. There sublunary Things being too little and narrow for our wide and comprehensive Minds, do afford Matter of Vexation and Disappointment, but not of Contentment and Rest. All this World is not big enough to fill one Heart; therefore it must be something greater and better than the World that is provided of God to fill the Capacities and Desires of our Souls, otherwise there wou'd be no such a Thing as a compleat Happiness attainable by us.

(7.) That which is the End must be of greater Consideration and Value than the Means that conduce to it; yea, 'tis the End that puts a Value upon the Means. Now all the Pleasures of Duty, and all the Discoveries of Grace and Love from God, are but Means to an higher End; yet these
are

Heaven what good Men wou'd not exchange for a World of sinful Pleasures or dying Glories; what men must that Blessedness, and those Pleasures be, which these are leading us to! 'Twou'd not be worth the while of Immortal Spirits to live in this World, if it were not to be fitted and prepar'd for a better World above, where they shall live with God. Now if the Saints taste God's Goodness so plentifully by the way, what Entertainments will they have when they come Home! He is now leading them through an Enemy's Country towards his own House, and 'tis but reasonable for 'em to expect to fare better there than here.

(8.) We may see something of the Glories of Heaven in the Pavement of it, the starry Heavens that are expos'd to our Ocular View. With what an innumerable Company of glittering Luminaries is the visible Heaven garnish'd! Now if the Pavement or Outward Court be so glorious, how doth the Inward Palace exceed in Glory! Is the Frontispiece so richly adorn'd, what is there within, in the Upper Stories! May we not rationally infer, that as far as the whole World doth surpass a dark and narrow Room, so much in all Beauty and Delights doth our expected Place of Bliss excell the whole World?

In a Word, God Himself shall be the Universal Felicity of all his Saints, containing in Himself all particular Felicities without End, Number or Measure. He will be Light to our Understandings, Contentment to our Wills, and a continual Refreshment to our Memories, yea, God will be *All* in *All*.

From these Arguments which I have offer'd under the *second Motive*, you can't but conclude that the State of future Blessedness is *eminently* Glorious, and is worthy your most violent Pursuit. There is not only an *Immunity* from all Evils, both of Sin and

and Punishment, but a *Concurrence* of all desirable or conceivable Good. Of the Innumerable Company above there is not one Eye that weeps, nor any Breast that sighs, nor one Tongue that complains, nor any Appearance of Grief. There's no Infirmary of Body, no Treachery of Friends, or Persecution from Enemies; Not a Dog to bark, nor a Serpent to hiss against a Child of God in all the heavenly Paradise. There's no Satiety of present Enjoyments, nor Solicitude for the future. But a constant Fulness of Joy, and a constant Derivation of Assistance from God to change us from Glory to Glory, and to make our Faculties suitable to such a transcendent and high Condition.

3. This State of Blessedness that I'm persuading you to seek is possess'd by Thousands, who were once under as great Disadvantages for gaining it as you are. The Heavenly Host of perfected Spirits, who are now shining with Crowns on their Heads, and Palms in their Hands, and triumphing in the Sense of that glorious Victory they have obtain'd by the Blood of the Lamb, and the Help of the Spirit, were once such as you, labouring under a Body of Sin and Death, tempted by the Devil, allur'd by the World, discouraged by the Flesh: They had as many and as potent Enemies to grapple with as you have, and as little strength to make Resistance against them: They had as many Duties to perform, and as many Difficulties to encounter; and yet notwithstanding all these Disadvantages, Discouragements and Oppositions they became victorious through the Grace of God, and got safe to Heaven. Hereby they demonstrated, that the Terms of Salvation are not impracticable, that Heaven is not inaccessible, nor the Difficulties in the Way insuperable.

Now

Now have we such an Army of valiant Champions before us, who have led the Van, and fought the good Fight of Faith, and are more than Conquerors through Christ that loved them; and shall we be afraid to venture after them, and lose the Day by a cowardly Retreat? Have we such a Cloud of Witnesses in our Eye to encourage us to follow them that have weather'd out as sharp Conflicts as we are like to be call'd to, and shall we loyter, and trifle, and lose Heaven, and our Souls by preferring carnal Ease and worldly Entertainments to their Joys? Is it reasonable that we shou'd have easier Terms of Happiness than God propos'd to them? Is not their God alive, and ready to give forth the same Spirit and Power to us that he gave to them, if we earnestly seek them at his Hand?

4. If we miss of Heaven, we shall be beyond Expression miserable for ever. Either it will be very well or very ill with us after this Life. It will be either unconceivable Happiness, or unsupportable Torment; either superlative Joy, or dreadful Terror; either the Perfection of Pleasure, or Extremity of Pain. God and the Devil will divide the World. All the present Degrees and Distinctions of Men will at last be comprehended under that one Distinction of Good and Bad, Sheep and Goats, who shall be adjudg'd to two Receptacles, one of endless Beatitude, and the other of endless Woe. We read in 2 Sam. viii. 2. that *David smote Moab, and measur'd them with a Line, casting them down to the Ground: Even with two Lines measur'd he; to put to Death; and with one full Line to keep alive.* To allude to this, God will measure all Mankind with two Lines; with the one all the Godly whom he hath destin'd to Life, and with the other

other all the Wicked, whom he hath destin'd to Death; so that All will fall under one, or the other of these Lines, either the Line of Life, or the Line of Death.

Purgatory is a Popish Fiction for purging Peoples Pockets, and bringing Grist to their own Mill. It hath no Foundation or Footsteps in the Sacred Canon, nor is it of any Use in the Christian Life. The Scriptures tell us of no other Purgatory than the Blood of Jesus Christ, which purgeth the Conscience from dead Works. If there be then no middle State, it follows, that if we be excluded from the Joys of Heaven, we inevitably tumble into the bottomless Gulph of Hell. If we be excommunicated from the Presence of God, and the Society of the New Jerusalem, we must necessarily be thrust into the Regions of Darkness, and amongst the Society of Devils. If we hear not from Christ the Judge that Heart-ravishing Sentence, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World*, Mat. xxv. 34. We shall hear that Soul-confounding Doom, *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*, ver. 41. Now do ye know what it is to fall under this dreadful Sentence? Do ye know what it is to be damn'd? How much is wrapt up in this Sentence, *Depart from me*! How little are ye able to conceive the Import of it! And how much less are ye able to endure it! Now if ye are in no wise able to bear the Miseries of Hell, why will ye not labour to escape them? And know ye not that in striving to attain Heaven, ye fly from the Damnation of Hell? Methinks then, if the Glories of Heaven will not invite you to Obedience on the one Hand; the Fire and Brimstone on the other Hand shou'd fright you from Disobedience: For how can your Hearts endure, or your
Hands

hands be strong in the Day that God shall come
 forth in terrible Majesty, arm'd with Wrath and
 vengeance to consign you over to a State of eter-
 nal Despair and Horror! If ye can't endure to
 hold your Finger in the Flame of a Candle for one
 quarter of an Hour, how will you bear up, when
 ye shall be encompass'd with a Lake of Fire that
 shall seize every Part of you with the utmost Fury
 and Violence! Were you sentenc'd only to lie in
 the Posture without Motion for a whole Year, tho'
 ye were upon a Bed of Down, how wou'd you
 struggle at the Thoughts of such a Penalty? But
 this is nothing to a Man's being confin'd to a Bed
 of Flames World without End. If you can't bear
 to think on such a Condition, much less will you
 bear the Condition itself.

What, shall the ever-gnawing Worm of Consci-
 ence, that never dieth, a Fire that never shall be
 quenched, unmixt Darkness, without a Beam of
 light; The Company of raging Devils insulting
 over the Misery they have brought us into, a De-
 spair of ever mending our Condition; No Pity
 or Commiseration in the Breast of any to remit or
 lessen our Grief; Gnashing of Teeth for Rage, and
 enmity at the Inexorable Justice of God, and per-
 petual Envy at the glorious Condition of those
 whom we once despis'd; Shall not all these have
 more than the Force of *Rhetorick* or *Oratory* in them
 to dissuade us from undoing our selves, and leaping
 into Hell! If these Things be better than a Life of
 Joy and Praise in the Kingdom of Heaven, then
 make your Choice. God sets before you Heaven
 and Hell, as ye chuse ye shall have; therefore
 chuse Life, that it may go well with you, and
 not Death.

5. We all profess to be willing to arrive at this blessed Port; so that I am perswading you to nothing but what is agreeable to your own Profession.

Shou'd I go over this whole Congregation, and ask you One by One, whether ye be willing to go to Heaven; and wou'd be happy with God at Death, ye wou'd all answer me, *You were willing*. 'Tis con-natural and essential to Man to have a Propension to his own Felicity. The Principle of Self-Preservation will never suffer Men formally or directly to seek their own Misery. We have, I own, too many Rakehells now-a-days that in Words pray for Damnation to themselves, but we have so much Charity for 'em as to believe their Hearts never said *Amen* to such Imprecations.

Well then, if you be willing of the End, you shou'd consent to the *necessary Means* conducing to it, and not expect to be saved by *Miracle*. If you wou'd go to Heaven when you die, you must be qualified for it while you live. Yea, this is also what you profess a Willingness of; for all those Duties of Religion, which are the Means of your Happiness, on your Part, are compriz'd in your Baptismal Covenant, which you are all, I doubt not, ready to declare you stand by. So that what I am pressing you to is but to live up to your Profession, to be no Hypocrites, to have that Religion which you make a show of, not to deceive your selves by pretending to chuse Heaven as your Happiness, while you'll not come up to the Terms of it, nor perform the Conditions absolutely necessary thereunto. If you are determin'd for Heaven, you must part with Every thing that may hinder you from coming there. If you wou'd sail to the blessed Shore, you must cast the unprofitable

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able Baggage of Sin over-board, you must trust Jesus Christ your Pilot, and not upon every Storm, and the Sight of every Danger, wish your selves in another Vessel. But when you are in Distress, and ready to perish, cry out to your Pilot Christ, and look towards the Shore, and make nearer Advances till you are blessed with an expected Arrival.

In short, If you are not yet perswaded to do all you can for Heaven, and to seek it in the first Place, 'tis to be fear'd that your Profession is but disguis'd Hypocrisy, and that you were never yet sincerely willing to be sav'd in God's Way, and on Christ's Terms.

6. All your Labour is lost that is not refer'd to this blessed State. If after all your Pains for the World and Creature-Enjoyments, you lose your never-dying Souls; may not we rationally conclude you have lost your Pains, and spent your Strength in vain, *Mat. xvi. 26. For what is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* What Advantage accrues to a Man from that Labour which ends in Damnation! What do those Pains avail a Man that leave him under the Wrath of God! Whatever a Man hath gain'd by his Industry and Foresight; if he have gain'd no Part in the Kingdom of Heaven, he'll be found a Loser, and to have made a bad Bargain, in the Day when God takes away his Soul, and delivers it up to the Devil. If in that very Labour which we bestow for our daily Bread, and the *Meat that perisheth*, we have not an Eye at the *Meat which endureth to everlasting Life*, as our great End, *God will destroy both it and us*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Do we labour to be Rich only that we may be High and Great, that we may draw to us the Respect of Men, and have Provision to spend upon our Lusts; and not

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that

that we may be capacitated for good Works, and have to give to him that needeth, or as a Means and Help to further us in our Duty? shall we not have Reason to look on such Labour as lost? When we lie on our Death-beds, and all our Riches can't minister the least Relief to our departing Souls, shan't we grow sick at the Thoughts of our lost Pains? And so far is it from being culpable and mercenary, to look at our Reward in a due Subordination to the Glory of God, that I fear not to aver that all the Labour we bestow in Religious Duties is to no Purpose, if not bestow'd with an Eye to the Recompence of Reward; and all our good Works are dead Works, if not animated by our Faith in, and Expectation of final Happiness in the Enjoyment of God.

7. Consider what a World of Pains Men will take for the transient Things of this Life; and is it not a shame for *Christians* to be outdone in Point of Diligence by laborious *Mammonists*? Shall the Worldling get up early in the Morning to follow his Earthly Business, and shall the Christian lie stretching himself upon his Bed of Ease, and cry, *Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep*, as if the other was in more haste, or had Matters of greater Moment to attend than he? Shall the Men of this World be *wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light*? Shall they lay out more Pains for Shadows and Vanities, than we will do for Durable, and Soul-enriching Substance? Shall a Feather, a Trifle, be more eagerly catch'd at than a never-fading Crown? Shall we do less for a Kingdom, than others will do for a Belly full of Meat, or a Skin full of Drink? Tell it not in *Gath*, publish it not in the Streets of *Askelon*. Let it never be said that others bid more for

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Dross and Dung; than we for a Diadem of Glory; that others set a higher Price upon their Farms and Cattle, than we upon our Souls, and incorruptible Treasures. Since there is a vast Disproportion between this World and that to come, since the whole Globe of Earth is but a little Point, compar'd with the Immensity of the highest Heavens: Let us make this Use of the Folly of the Worldlings Diligence for the Corruptibilities of Time, to be thereby excited to shew our Wisdom in laying out our Labour for the Durabilities of Eternity.

8. What are we sent into this World for; and why do we live in it, but to prepare our selves, and to be prepared for a Better? For Time is for the sake of Eternity, and the present Life is a Passage only into the future. God did not therefore send us into the World to grasp at and live upon the Things of Sense, or that we might take our Rest in it, and say, "Here will we dwell for ever, for we have a Delight therein." The constant Departure of our Friends out of this World plainly tells us that 'tis not our Home, our native Country, or our *Canaan*, but a Wilderness, a State of Preparation for it. If then we love a Wilderness Life, and look not after a better, if we are so taken with the Entertainment of our Inn, that we forget our Home, and have no Mind to be nearer to it; we fall short of the End of our Creation and Life, we answer not the Design of our Coming here. If we mean to come up to the End of our Living, we must behave our selves as Strangers, Sojourners, and Pilgrims, as all our Fathers were; as those that have no continuing City, but who seek one to come; we must be striving if by any Means we may attain the Resurrection of the Dead, and then at the Period of this natural Life,

Mortality shall be swallowed up in Life eternal.

Now taking it for granted, that by these **MOTIVES** foregoing, you are determin'd to seek that future Blessedness which will consist in a Likeness to Christ, and be caused by a Vision of him; I shall direct you to some **MEANS** of obtaining that Blessedness. And,

[1.] If you wou'd possess it at last, you must beforehand *set your Affections upon it*, Col. iii. 2. Believe that your Treasures are above, and your Affections will easily follow your Treasures; and if you are indeed bound for Heaven, you must believe you have Riches there that will requite all your Pains in Travelling towards 'em. Well then, don't lie grovelling upon Earth, but elevate those Earthly Hearts into an Heavenly Frame. Go take a *Pisgah* Sight of the Heavenly Country, that your Eye may affect your Heart. Retire from the Noise and Hurry of the World to converse with Things unseen, and by frequent Conversing with 'em, make 'em familiar to your Thoughts and Affections. Endeavour by suitable Considerations, by Reading and Prayer to disengage your Love from the Things of this World, from the Riches, Honours and Pleasures of it.

Our blessed Saviour, who understood the Nature and Worth of Earthly Enjoyments, has not only given his Judgment concerning them, That *Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things that we possess*, Luke xii. 15. but he has thunder'd out a dreadful Lecture against Worldly-minded Men, *That 'tis easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for such to get into God's Kingdom*, Mat. xviii. 24. They who are fondest of 'em, will find at length that they have embrac'd a Cloud, and hugg'd a Shadow. *Quarum Rerum nulla est satietas?*

Divitiarum.

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As Contentment is seldom connected with 'em, so they are the usual Food of Vice. Moreover, the fancied Happiness of the Worldling and Sensualist is of a very short Continuance, like the Crackling of Thorns under a Pot. This one Circumstance doth exceedingly disparage them, and shou'd assist us in conquering our Fondness for 'em. That our Hearts being free of the World, may ascend up to Christ and Heaven, and lead us the Way thither.

[2.] Imitate and follow the Lord Jesus; for if you bear not the Image of his Holiness upon Earth, you will never bear the Image of his Glory in Heaven.

Imitate him in Meekness and Humility, *Mat. xi. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.* Call not for Fire from Heaven upon your Enemies. Render not Evil for Evil. Learn of Jesus Christ to brook an Injury without a Transport of Passion; and to digest an Affront without a revengeful Thought. Entertain a low Opinion of your selves, as a Means to Contentment in any Station.

Imitate him in Sanctity and Love. As he was, so be ye in the World, without Spots in your Lives, and full of Love to God and Souls. The Enemies of Christ, tho' very numerous, and very watchful, never saw him step awry, nor were able to fasten a Scandal on him. Strive you to be like him. And as to Love, every Word of his Mouth, every Wound in his Body breath'd Love, Love to the Father, Love to fall'n Creatures; bear you his Resemblance. 'Tis Sanctity and Love upon Earth, that must prepare you to shine in the Lustre of those Perfections eternally in Heaven.

Imitate his Obedience, in which he was very illustrious, *Phil. ii. 8. Being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.* The Obedience of Christ was a Latitude equal to the Law of the Father under which he was. And tho' the Commandment was exceeding Broad, yet the Obedience of our Lord Jesus answer'd the Breadth thereof. And he obey'd with great Willingness, without Reluctancy. Let us now look to our own Obedience, whether we have a sincere Respect to all God's Commands, without disputing the Reasons of 'em, or delaying the Performance. 'Tis reported to the Praise of *Alexander's* Soldiers, that they were observant of the least Nod of their Commander. And that *Scipio* had not a Man under him, who wou'd not at a Word of his General throw himself from a Precipice into the Sea. *Nullus est Horum, qui non conscensa Turri semet in Mare precipitaturus sit, si jussero.*

Now are we as prepar'd to cast our selves into Troubles and Sufferings at the Word of Christ, and when his Interest requires it? Tho' Christ doth not always actually call for the Lives of his Servants, yet he will have them at his Devotion as the Condition of a better Life with him in Exchange for 'em. We must be obedient unto Death in Resolution and Disposition of Mind, or our Obedience will not be unto Life in the Issue and Event. If you wou'd be highly exalted as Christ was, you must practise a humble and universal Obedience as he did.

Imitate his Invincible Patience and Self-denial: *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffer'd, he threatned not, but committed himself to him that judgeth Righteously, 1 Pet. ii. 23.* He denied himself all carnal Ease, and often lawful Refreshments

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ments and Rest, that he might the better do his Father's Will. He despis'd the Riches and Glory of this World, having his Eye upon another; He loved not his Life too well to part with it for lost Souls. Now can we be compos'd under Sufferings and Losses from this Consideration, that whatever befalls us doth not happen but by the Will of God, and the Conduct of his All-wise and Righteous Providence? Doth this Thought form our Minds to Patience and Submission, when Men insult, revile and abuse us? Can we take up the Cross and follow Christ? Self-denial and Patience are the Graces that must carry us through many Tribulations into God's Kingdom.

If in these Respects the Life of Jesus be manifested in your mortal Flesh, you may expect at his Appearance to appear with him in Glory.

[3.] Get clear of Sin. This must be repented of, and forsaken and pardon'd before you can be capable of seeing the Face of Christ in Peace. Allowed Sin renders your Preparation for Heaven questionable; I say more, it renders your Entering there impossible. Let your Souls then be possess'd with a judicious Disallowance of Sin, and an Inward prevailing Aversion to it: This will argue your Right to, and your Fitness for the *Beatifick Vision*. And deceive not your selves by pleading, that tho' you daily Sin, you also daily Repent, and therefore hope for daily Pardon; I own that in ordinary, unavoidable Infirmities, in Sins we term *Venial*, or such as may consist with a State of Grace, this will hold Good: But when Men will frequently Swear, Whore, be Drunk, Deceive, Revenge, Lie and Backbite, and then comfort themselves, that they repent of all, and so spend their Lives in a Circle of gross Sinning and Repenting; it will

Prove an unprofitable Repentance, and never bring Men to Heaven. Our Divines at the Synod of Dort conclude, "That tho' a Godly Man lose not his Justification by gross Sinning, yet he contracts such an Incapacity of going to Heaven in that State, as must be remov'd by Repentance, or he cou'd not be saved." The Antient Fathers rejected those Penitents, who Sinning and Repenting, and Repenting and Sinning, checker'd their Life all along with the one and the other. But let not true Penitents take Discouragement from this Doctrine, and ask, What will become of me, if this Doctrine be true, who have oft sinn'd since, I hope, I sincerely repented of Sin. For,

1.) A true Penitent's turning from Sin, stands in Opposition not to every particular Act of Sin, as if every Sin he commits after his Repentance, nullified that Repentance, and made it of no Effect, but it stands in Opposition to a former sinful Course and Conversation. *They who are dead to sin, live no longer therein, Rom. vi. 2.*

2.) A true Penitent's turning to God stands in Opposition not to an unwilling Captivity to Sin, but unto a willing Subjection to it. A true Convert to God can never more put himself under the Government of Sin.

3.) A true Penitent's turning from Sin, stands not in Opposition to every sudden, indeliberate Surprizal by Sin, but in Opposition to a deliberate League and Friendship with Sin. Who liveth and sinneth not? But no true Penitent can make a Covenant with Sin, for he has made a Covenant against it. An Enemy may invade a Country when the Sinkports are not well guarded, but there

ere is a vast Difference between this, and the
 inhabitants striking up a voluntary League with
 him. The Language of a true Penitent to Sin is
 such as this, "Oh thou cursed Enemy of God
 and my Soul, who hast destroyed Thousands;
 Come not near the Doors of my House; De-
 part from me, for I can't endure thine Appear-
 ance, I have forsaken Sin, and I am fully re-
 solv'd to sin no more." 'Tis certain that Sin
 must be thus banish'd from our Hearts, and lives
 by renewed Repentance, otherwise it will banish
 us from Heaven.

[4.] Abound in Good Works. These, tho' they
 are not *Causa Regnandi*, the Meritorious Cause of
 our Reward; yet they are *Via ad Regnum*, our
 Way to it. 'Tis for a Papist to annex Merit to
 'em, but 'tis for a Christian to be adorn'd with 'em.
 We dare not make Good Works meritorious, lest
 we shou'd derogate from the Honour and Offices
 of Christ; We dare not make them unnecessary,
 lest we make our selves unworthy of him, and go
 without him. Our Salvation, tho' it is purchas'd
 for us by another, must be wrought out by our
 selves, *Phil. ii. 12.* Believing will not save us with-
 out Doing; for Faith without Works is dead; and
 how can a dead Faith impart Life to a dead Soul!
 Faith is a Promise to be true to God, and Obe-
 dience is the Performance of this Promise. By
 Faith are Works made perfect, and the Promise is
 made perfect by a Performance.

Every Christian must walk to Heaven upon two
 Feet, Faith and Obedience. One Foot, namely
 Faith, he must fix upon the Center Christ, whilst
 with the other Foot of Obedience he goes round
 the Circumference of all his Duties. Good Works
 are the Evidence of our Faith, and subordinate
 Con-

Conditions of our Justification as continued, yet a true saving justifying Faith cannot be without 'em; For a Disposition and Resolution to obey is necessarily implied in taking Christ for our King, and actual Obedience when call'd to it. Some Divines question whether Good Works be necessary to our Justification, but all sound Divines agree that they are necessary to our Salvation. Some say, that to *Work for Life*, is to bring us under the Old Covenant; but the Truth is, that though Christ has freed us from Obedience to the Law of Works as a Covenant of Life, he hath not freed us from Obeying the Law or Covenant of Grace for this End, that we may by so doing obtain everlasting Life. When we have by Faith consented to accept Jesus Christ and his Benefits, and do give up ourselves to him, then Works, or New Obedience must follow as necessary to continue our Right to Pardon and Life; for none have special Benefit by Christ's Covenant, but those who *keep* his Covenant as well as *make* it. Well then, see that ye who *profess to believe in God, be careful to maintain good Works*, Tit. iii. 8. These Things are good and profitable unto Men. 'Tis not Talking and Saying thou hast Faith, and believest in Christ, that will prove thy Faith.

There are Two principal Acts of saving Faith; *One* an Act of Acceptation, a receiving Christ on his own Terms, and a preferring him above all Sin, the World and Self: The *Other* is an Act of Resignation, whereby a Man gives up his whole Self to Christ deliberately, solemnly, seriously, with a Mind to be his for ever; and not only to be saved by him, but to serve him. So that Service and Obedience are the proper Evidences of a saving Faith. Now what Service, what good Works hast thou to produce, as Evidence on thy Side, to de-

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monstrate that thy Faith is not a dead, but a living, practical Faith? Where's thy Justice and Righteousness in thy Dealings? Where's thy Love and Charity, thy Prayers, thy Meekness, Patience and Self-denial? If thou hast a Life bespangled with these Ornaments; if thou hast been Eyes to the Blind, Feet to the Lamé, and hast visited the Fatherless and Widow in their Affliction, made the Widows Heart to sing for Joy, cloathed the Naked, fed the Hungry, gone to Christ's Members in Prison, and comforted them; these Works of the holy Gospel-Obedience, this Service of Love will witness for thee, that thou hast an higher Faith than the Faith of Devils, even the Faith of God's Elect that worketh by Love, that conquereth the World, and brings forth Fruit unto Perfection.

This Conformity to Jesus Christ, to his Temper and his Gospel will prepare you for, and entitle you to, that future Blessedness which consists in Likeness to Christ, accompanied with and caused by a Vision of him.

Prop. V. A full Persuasion or Assurance of our Interest in the Beatifick Vision is attainable in this Life. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

In the Prosecution of this Proposition, I shall,

1. Give you the Proof of it.
2. Shew you the Grounds of this Knowledge or Assurance; how those came by it who have attain'd it.
3. Draw some Inferences from it.

1. I shall

1. I shall offer some Arguments for the Proof of the Proposition, premising only that Divine usually distinguish Certainty into

{ *Objective* and
 { *Subjective.*

By *Objective* Certainty is meant either only the Existence of the Object, in the Being of the future Blessedness, and our Right to it, which is the Privilege of every Believer whether he see it or not, or the Object as it exists in the Humane Mind.

By *Subjective* Certainty is meant a firm Persuasion wrought in the Mind, both of the Existence of the future Blessedness, and of our own Covenant Right to it. 'Tis this Latter, which is Certainty in a proper Sense, that I shall prove attainable, by the following Arguments.

First Argument.

(1.) Assurance of our Salvation is attainable, because it hath been attain'd. *Ab esse ad posse valet Consequentia.* Job had attain'd it, this he professeth, Ch. xix. 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and tho' after my Skin Worms devour the Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God.* The Apostle Paul professeth the same Assurance, 2 Cor. v. *We know, that if our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* What thou'd make that Assurance impossible, that was heretofore possible? Have we not the same Word or Rule to judge our selves by, the same Power

f-Reflection, and of comparing our State with
 Rule, and the same Means and Helps to ar-
 e at an Acquaintance with the State of our
 ists, that the Saints formerly had? What then
 it that can take away from us the Possibility of
 ? Or shall we belie the Saints, and tell 'em their
 experiences were but Delusions? Shall we charge
 mistakes in such momentous Matters upon the
 men of the Scripture, and in Points which they
 are delivering to future Ages under the extraor-
 ary Conduct of the Spirit of Truth? At this
 ate, what Certainty wou'd be left us of any other
 int which they have deliver'd to us by the same
 inspiration? If they might mistake, or be deluded
 one Part of Revelation, why not in another?
 and then what becomes of the Ground of our
 Faith and Religion?

Second Argument.

(2.) The 2d Argument is taken from the Nature,
 Use and End of the Holy Scriptures. If the Scripture
 be a good Foundation of Assurance, then Assurance
 is attainable, but the Scripture is a good Founda-
 tion of Assurance, and that upon a twofold Ac-
 count.

(1.) As to the Matter reveal'd. The Sum of
 Scripture-Revelation is the Manifestation of God's
 Grace in Jesus Christ unto lost Sinners, or of his
 Willingness to be reconcil'd to 'em, and save 'em
 upon fit Terms. Now this Grace of God, and
 Good-Will to Men, as reveal'd in Scripture, is a
 good Foundation of Assurance; and that,

- (1. As 'tis Free Grace.
- (2. As 'tis Engaged Grace.

The

The Scripture-Revelation in short is this; *He that hath the Son, hath Life; He that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life,* 1 John v. 12.

2.) As to the Manner of the Revelation, 'tis full and plain, 'tis assuredly divine, and is intended to give the Saints Assurance: *These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name,* John xx. 31. If the Scriptures both as to the Matter contained in them, and as to the Manner in which they are wrote, are intended not only to form in Men Gospel-Requirements and Qualifications, but also to give Men Assurance of their being wrought in 'em, then that Assurance is possible: And if not attain'd to, 'tis not through any Default in the Holy Scriptures, but in Men themselves.

Third Argument.

(3.) As God has given Believers a good Foundation of Assurance in the Word, so he hath given them sufficient Help and Power to build upon that Foundation, in regard he hath endowed them with such Faculties by which they are able certainly to discern, and judge whether their Hearts and Lives agree with the Rule of Faith and Manners. Now this Power of Self-reflexion and Self-judging wou'd seem to be given in vain, if it were not possible for Man, by the use of it, to know himself, and in what Condition his Soul is with relation to God and Eternity; And the Spirit which is in Man, wou'd not then know the Things of a Man, which the Scripture affirms it doth, 1 Cor. ii. 11.

Fourth

Fourth Argument.

(4.) Assurance is attainable, otherwise those Commands of God wherein he requires us to *give Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*, 2 Pet. 10. and to *examine our selves whether we be in the Faith*, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. wou'd be in vain. But 'tis not consistent with the Goodness and Wisdom of God to lay upon us Commands naturally impossible to be fulfill'd by us. He'll not so tantalize his Creatures, as to bid 'em search and examine for what is not to be found, or to make sure what they can't be assur'd of. To what Purpose will Men examine and prove themselves, if after their most diligent Scrutiny, and all possible Pains they can take for this End, they must be oblig'd to sit down in Uncertainty, because what they are enquiring after is impossible to be known?

Fifth Argument.

(5.) God hath design'd our Assurance in the Instituting of those Ordinances which do properly tend to the begetting and increasing of Assurance, as Baptism and the Lord's Supper: God has therefore confirm'd his Promises and gracious Covenant by these visible Signs and Seals, that he might satisfy us of his Love and Favour to us. Now these Sealing Ordinances cou'd never obtain their full End, if Assurance was unattainable. For these Ordinances don't only Seal the Truth of God in performing his Covenant and Promises, but also the Believer's Interest in that Covenant and those Promises. And can we conceive that God will set his Seal to a Blank?

Sixth Argument.

(6.) This may be taken from the Office of the Holy Spirit; One great Branch of which is to *witness together with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. His first Work is to form Grace in us, and then to enable us to see it form'd there. To deny the Possibility of Assurance, wou'd be to nullify this latter Part of the Spirit's Office, to deny his Testimony, yea to make him a false Witness.

Seventh Argument.

(7.) If Assurance is not attainable, why are all those Marks laid down in Holy Scripture, whereby we may know whether we are the Children of God? Is the Image of God, and of the Devil, so much alike, that there's no distinguishing them? Is there so little Difference between the Righteous and the Wicked that they can't be known asunder? Moreover, what Comfort wou'd the Promises of God afford to the best Men, if they cou'd make no Application of 'em to themselves, nor were able after all their Pains to see their own Interest in 'em? I may add, that a rational Faculty can't be ignorant of it self and its own Acts; He that understands, perceives that he understands; He that judges, perceives he judges; So he that believes, may perceive his own Act that he does believe; He that loves Jesus Christ, need not be ignorant that he doth so; and he that lives a holy just and charitable Life, can't well but see and know that he doth so; and consequently that he has God's Mark upon him, and has a Gospel Claim to Life eternal.

2. I am to show you the Grounds of this Knowledge or Assurance, how the Saints that have attain'd it, come by it.

- { 1. *Negatively.*
- { 2. *Positively.*

Negatively. 1.) 'Tis not ground'd on external Sense. Whoever heard God by a Voice from Heaven, telling him, "Thou shalt be sav'd, Heaven is thine: Thou art within the Compass of my Decree of Election, I have chosen thee to everlasting Life before the Foundation of the World was laid?" This is not the Way of God. This is not the Method of Assurance. We are not to expect extraordinary Revelations to our Senses, since God hath given us a more sure Word of Prophecy; whereunto if we give Heed, we shall do well.

2.) Nor doth it come into our Faculties by the Light of Nature, as the first Principles, or by the Force and Improvement of Natural Reason in a Discursive Way, without some higher Help. A Man by the Light of Nature may know that he is superior in Being to the Brutes, and therefore made for some higher and nobler End. By the Light of Reason he may know that God is to be ador'd, Parents to be honour'd, no Man to be wrong'd, that he shou'd do to others, as he wou'd have them do unto him. But how God will dispose of him to Eternity, which Way to ensure his everlasting Happiness after Death; this is known not by *natural*, but by *supernatural Revelation*: which discovers the Necessity and Usefulness of

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Scripture-Revelation, without which we should have been left at Uncertainties, and in the Dark, as the Heathens were. Nothing but Scripture affords us a sufficient *Medium*, or *Premises* whence to draw the certain and comfortable Conclusion of our own future Happiness. This only shews us the Way to Salvation, and teaches us how to secure it.

3.) Nor is Assurance grounded on any Internal Revelation of the Spirit, without the External Revelation of the Scriptures, and the Use of Reason; which if once admitted, wou'd open a wide Door to *Enthusiasm* and *Self-delusion*. But,

Positively, We know that we shall be like Christ, and see him as he is,

1.) By the Word of God, or supernatural Revelation, as the *Means* or *Instrument* of begetting this Assurance. But it may be enquir'd, How doth the Word of God contribute to this Assurance? Doth God in his Word tell us by Name particularly who are elected, and shall be saved; and who are reprobated, and shall be damn'd? Doth the Scripture say absolutely, "Thou, *Peter*, *John* " or *Thomas*, shalt be saved?" Are any in so many Words nominated as Heirs of Salvation?

I Answer, 'Tis worthy to be known what Interest Scripture-Revelation hath in this Assurance, and you may take it in these following Particulars.

(1.) The Holy Scriptures do assure us there is a State of Blessedness to be attain'd; They bring Life and Immortality to Light. Now if there be such a State of Blessedness prepar'd, it must be

pre-

prepared for some Possessors and Inhabitants. God wou'd not provide such a State only to exercise our Admiration, or employ our Contemplation ; but for Enjoyment, and to engage Mens Endeavours and Diligence. So that the Object or Thing to be insur'd is brought to our Knowledge by the Revelation of the Holy Scripture.

(2.) The Holy Scriptures set before us the Characters and Qualifications of the Persons that shall arrive at this State of Blessedness. And who are they ? I answer, All penitent Believers, and holy obedient Walkers ; The Pure in Heart, and Poor and Meek in Spirit ; They who hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and can endure Persecution for Religion's sake ; The Merciful and Peace-makers. These are pronounced Blessed, and are set apart for the Kingdom of God. In a Word, All whom God hath regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, in whom he hath form'd a new Mind, and a new Will, and hath turned to a new Life, and who have God's Image upon them, which is the Mark of their Election, and their Ticket for Heaven. *The Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19.*

Now from these Two put together, viz. The Revelation of the objective Happiness, and the Description of the Subjects capable of it, resulteth this Proposition, (which is one of the *Premises* from which the ascertaining Inference of our Salvation is drawn,) That all true Believers shall be certainly saved ; Or that whosoever believeth

in Jesus Christ, is an Heir of the Kingdom of Heaven ; for the Connection between these Two is necessary, inseparable and infallible.

(3.) The Holy Scriptures are a Means of working in us the Evidences of our Salvation: For *Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*, Heb. x. 17. So that the Word is influential upon our Assurance, not only as it describes the Evidences, and discovers the Qualifications of those who shall be saved, but as 'tis employ'd to form in us these evidential Qualifications. It doth not only shew us what kind of Persons they are, or how they are qualified, who shall live with God, and see Christ ; but it has an Aptitude in it to make us such qualified Persons.

We know that we shall be like Christ, and see him as he is.

2) By Faith as our *Evidence* or *Title*. Faith may be without Assurance, but Assurance cannot be without Faith. The Covenant of Grace hath made Faith our Title, and the strongest, most lively and most practical Faith is the clearest Title. This leads to what follows. We know it,

3.) By the Testimony of our own Conscience as a *Witness*. A Man by the Operation of his Conscience, especially after 'tis enlighten'd by the Gospel, may know what he loves, and what he hates ; what is highest in his Esteem and Choice ; what are his sweetest Thoughts and Relishes, and how the Pulse of his Soul beats. For, saith the Apostle, *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Witness in Himself*, 1 John v. 10. *If our Heart con-*
demn

demn us not, then have we Confidence towards God,
 1 John iii. 20. And hereby we do know that we know
 him, if we keep his Commandments, 1 John ii. 3.
 Hence we see that Man hath a Principle within
 him, by which he is conscious of his own Inclina-
 tions and Acts. And the Part that Conscience
 bears in Assurance is to make the Assumption, or
 second Proposition, namely, *I believe*.

But because the Heart is deceitful, and Consci-
 ence partial, and may impose on us, because it
 may be brib'd, and is but one Witness, and its
 Testimony not so valid and authentick of itself:
 Therefore,

4) We have the Testimony of the Holy Spirit,
 who is an infallible Witness, and concurring with
 our Conscience, gives the greater Validity to its
 Testimony. *The Spirit it self beareth Witness with
 our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.*

There is a *Twofold Inward Testimony of the Spirit*.

The First is *Objective*, namely the holy Changes
 it causes, or its sanctifying Work upon Chri-
 stians.

The Second is an *Effective* persuading Testimony.
 The Spirit's holy Changes upon your Heart are a
 standing objective Witness, which you ought to
 improve to your own Consolation, and He is your
 Exciter and Helper in that Improvement. And
 as I conceive, the Way by which the Spirit is an
 Effective persuading Witness in us is, as He shines
 upon his own Work within us, and gives us a
 Sight of it, and from thence inables us to draw

this comfortable Conclusion, "I shall be saved."
For thus the whole *Syllogism* is form'd,

Whosoever believes, shall be sav'd;

I believe,

Therefore I shall be sav'd.

The first Proposition is in the Word of God. The second in the Soul or Conscience of the Believer. And the Conclusion depending on both, and which contains our Assurance, is to be attained by a special Efficiency of the Spirit. But if you will expect a Voice or Witness within you, to tell you the same Things by immediate Revelation, and not deduce your Assurance from that permanent Testimony I have nam'd, I shall not marvel if you miss of your Expectation. For I can't apprehend that the Saints Assurance of Salvation is to be resolv'd into immediate, or extraordinary Suggestions of the Spirit, as the Cause of it; As if the Spirit shou'd in an *Enthusiastick* Way whisper to the Soul, *Thy Name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life; Thou art one that belongs to God; Thy Salvation is sure*, or the like. Therefore let us not deceive ourselves with the Expectation of any such Thing: For this Work of Assurance is brough about in a Scriptural, rational Way by several Gradations, or Steps; As,

[1.] By the Soul's being assured of the undoubted Truth and Certainty of the Promises of the Word.

[2.] By the Spirit's working in the Soul the Conditions of the Promises.

[3.] By

[3.] By his clearing up to the Soul its Interest in the Promises, which is done by his giving it a View of the great Things he hath done in it and for it, that entitle it to the Promises, and so Comfort and Satisfaction is instill'd from this regular Application of the Promises; insomuch that the Soul is fill'd with Joy and Peace in Believing, and can say, *The Promises are mine; I have seen my Name in them; The Lines are fall'n to me in pleasant Places; I have a goodly Heritage; Nothing shall be able to separate me from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.*

3. I shall conclude with some Inferences.

First, OF CONFUTATION.

This Doctrine overthrows the Popish Doctrine of Doubting. To militate against which, we need no other Weapons than those that are fetch'd out of their Magazine. For themselves hold, that Men may perfectly fulfill the whole Law of God; and if so, certainly they may know they are thus perfect, otherwise they wou'd be perfect without perfection; So that 'tis a Contradiction to say Men may be Perfect, and not Assur'd. Moreover, some of them affirm that one Man may be assur'd of another's Salvation. For Instance, the Pope declares he was sure of *Bellarmino's* Salvation, when he canoniz'd him for a Saint. Now, can a Man know another better than he knows himself, or see farther into another's Heart than his own? Yea, they say, a Priest can give Assurance by his bare Word. Their foremention'd champion saith, That after Confession the Priest,

by the Word of Absolution, doth give such Evidence of Justifying - Grace, as there can be no Mistake in. Thus you see into what Contradictions Men run, when they leave the Word of Truth.

(1.) 'Tis objected, That we are requir'd to *pass the Time of our sojourning here in Fear*, 1 Pet. i. 17. and that, *Blessed is he that feareth always*, Prov. xxviii. 14.

I Answer; We distinguish between a Fear of Distrust and Doubt, and a Fear of pious Solitude, which is opposite to Carnal Security; allowing the Latter to be a Christian's Duty, not the Former.

(2.) They object, *Rom. xi. 34. Who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor?*

I Answer, 1.) No Man knows the Mind or Decree of God touching other Mens Election, who are elected, and who not. This seems to be the Scope of the Place. The *Gentiles* scorn'd the *Jews*, and they again condemn'd the *Gentiles*. Now, says the Apostle, none knows the Mind of God, whom he will save, and whom he will condemn; to whom he will send his Gospel, and to whom he will deny it.

2.) No Man knows the Mind of God in this Sense, so as to give a Reason of God's Decree, why he chooseth one, and not another.

3.) No

3.) No Man knows his Mind or Decree by looking upon that alone abstractly, but only by the Effects thereof, and by the Revelation thereof. I had rather, saith *one*, see the real Impressions of a God-like Nature upon my Soul, than have a Vision from Heaven, or an Angel sent to tell me that my Name was enroll'd in the "Book of Life." And the Scripture-Revelation, the Word preach'd to us is this, *That if thou shalt confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine Heart that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved*, Rom. xi. 8.

(3.) 'Tis objected that this is a Doctrine of Libertinism, and tends to make Men careless of their Souls, and loose in their Practices.

I Answer, 1.) That God will not put new Wine into old Bottles. The new Name is not given till the new Creature be fram'd. That Disposition which wou'd turn the Grace of God into Wantonness, and prompt Men to Sin, because Grace hath abounded, is first taken away before the Soul can be possess'd of Assurance. The Witnessing-Work of the Spirit is not Antecedent, but Consequent to his Sanctifying-Work. The weakest and worst Sort of Christians are morally unfit for the Joy of Assurance, which is usually an Attendant of high Degrees of Grace.

2.) Love is a sweeter, surer and stronger Principle of Obedience than Fear. All the Terrors of Mount *Sinai*, the Thunder and Lightning, the Earthquakes and Smoaking of the Mountain, and the Voice of the Trumpet, have not so much

much Power and Prevalency in them; as the calm and still Voice of Mount *Sion*. Potent is the Oratory of Love. A Slave but watches for an Opportunity to shake off the Yoke, but Love makes it easy and pleasant. The Love of Christ constrains the Children of God to universal Obedience. There are none that walk more closely with God, than those who are assur'd of his Love. Look up to Heaven, there you see glorious Angels and glorified Saints, that have not only a full Assurance, but a full Possession of the Love of their God; that have not a bare Prospect of *Canaan*, but are feeding on its Fruits, most swift in doing the Will of God. Where has God more cheerful Obedience than from these! How joyfully do these ministring Spirits run about their glorious Errands! Therefore are they made our Pattern, *Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Second, Of CAUTION.

(1.) Tho' Assurance is necessary to the Well-being, yet not to the absolute Being of a Christian. A true Child of God may for a while not know that he is so. He may doubt of his Regeneration and Adoption, and yet be an adopted Son. I do not make Assurance an Essential Act of Faith, 'tis rather an Act of Experience. 'Tis the Eminency of Faith, rather than the Essence of it. Faith is seldom crown'd with Assurance, until it has obtain'd a long Standing; It may end in Assurance, but never begins there. Yet at last All come not up to *Thomas's* Pitch to cry out, *My Lord, and my God.* The Condition, tho' it may be safe, is not comfortable, before Assurance in some Degree.

(2.) Tho'

(2.) Tho' special Grace will not be lost, yet the Assurance of it may. The Covenant ensures the Former, not the Latter. Without great Care and Circumspection you may sin away Assurance; and hurry your selves down from the bright Mountains of Joy and Comfort, into the dark Valleys of Fear and Despondency. A Child of God may walk in Darknes, and for a time see neither Sun nor Star-Light. Remember your Assurance is not settled upon you as an inheritance; The Date and the Patent of your Comforts are *ad Placitum*, during the divine measure.

(3.) Assurance doth not consist in an Indivisible Point, but admits of some Latitude and Degrees, of which some of God's People have a larger Measure than others. And the same Christian hath his Ebbings and Flowings, as in Point of Grace, so also in Assurance. In some 'tis stronger, in others weaker; and but few attain to a *Plerophory*, or to such a full Degree of it as to exclude all Doubts and Fear. They who are ripest in Grace, who are most vigilant to preserve and nourish it, who walk most closely with God, are the Christians who enjoy the largest share of this rich Possession.

Third, Of DIRECTION.

Is so valuable a Privilege as Assurance attainable? See that none of you rest in some probable Expectation of Heaven, but use all means of coming at a Certainty, or full Persuasion.

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suasion. And the proper Means are such as these.

(1.) True and unfeign'd Repentance. This must go before Assurance. Leave not off dealing with your Hearts, till you feel 'em inwardly melt and grieve, and bleed for Sin. As melted Wax is only capable of the Impressions of the Seal, so God seals his Love upon melting Hearts. God loves to pour this golden Oil of Gladness into the Vessel of a broken Spirit. This Mark of his special Love he sets upon the Mourners in Zion; For *they that sow in Tears, shall reap in Joy*, Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6. *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious Seed, shall doubtless come again with Rejoycing, bringing his Sheaves with him.* God will turn the Waters of true Penitents into Wine. While others then make a Mock at Sin, and so make their Damnation sure, Do you Weep for Sin, and so make your Salvation sure. If the Lord Jesus see that Sin is your Burden, that you labour under it, and are heavy laden with it, He will give you Rest by taking it off, and refresh your Souls with such comfortable Words as he once spake to the Man sick of the Palsy, *Son, be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee.*

(2.) Self-Search, and Soul-Examination, or diligent Comparing the State of your Hearts and Lives with the Rule of God's Word. There's no obtaining Assurance without the Knowledge of your selves, and the Temper of your Souls God-ward; And how shou'd you come to this Knowledge of your Spiritual State, or to Self-Acquaintance

such as Acquaintance, without examining and proving
 our selves, and Communing with your own
 Hearts? Self-Reflection is the Door of Assu-
 rance; For if upon an impartial and due Search
 you find an Harmony and Agreement betwixt
 our selves and the Rule, you may then con-
 clude that Mercy and Peace shall be upon you.
 If you find, that as Face answereth to Face, so
 the Frame of your Hearts within, and the ge-
 neral Course of your Lives without, answer to
 the pure and holy Laws of God, you are then
 in Christ, and there shall be no Condemnation
 to you. For the Word of God, not only in the
 Original Truth, but also in the Copy and Tran-
 script of it in your Hearts and Lives, shall en-
 dure for ever.

(3.) A vigorous Resistance of Unbelief, a
 Conflict with Doubts, and with whatever wou'd
 shake or stifle your Evidences. Unbelief in the
 Gospel-Promises, and in the Mercy and Good-
 ness of God, is one of the greatest Enemies to
 a Christian's Peace, and one Foundation of need-
 less and uneasy Doubts. Then, on the other side,
 Worldly Cares, the Guilt of known Sin, Security,
 spiritual Pride visibly deface a Man's Evidences,
 those which are to be drawn from his possessing
 the Gospel-Requirements, and performing the
 Gospel-Conditions. If once the World get the
 Upper Hand of you, 'twill be still clamouring
 in your Ears, *Make your House and Lands sure;*
Make sure of a Livelyhood and Portions for your
Children, and will allow you no Time for making
 your Calling and Election sure; and the Con-
 sequence will be, That when you leave your
 Houses

Houses and Inheritance on Earth, you'll not be sure of any in Heaven. And then if the Guilt of Sin unrepented of remain upon you, 'twill frustrate your Endeavours, dash your Hopes and break your Peace; for *there is no Peace to the Wicked*. You can't be assur'd of God's Love, whilst you love any Sin that his Soul hates.

(4.) The Practice of all known Duty. Look you to your Duties, and God will take Care of your Comforts; For Assurance is not so much a Spur to the Negligent, as the Fruit and Consequence of Diligence, and the Reward of the Diligent. Duty is the Seed of Consolation. We must first walk in the Fear of God, before we can walk in the Comforts of the Holy Ghost. Carry your selves then loyally to God as your King and Rector, and the Joy of the Lord as Benefactor, will be your Strength. It will at any Time be certain Matter of Rejoycing to you, if you have on your Side the *Testimony of a good Conscience, that in Godly Sincerity, and Gospel Simplicity, not in Fleishly Wisdom, ye have had your Conversation in the World*, 2 Cor. i. 12.

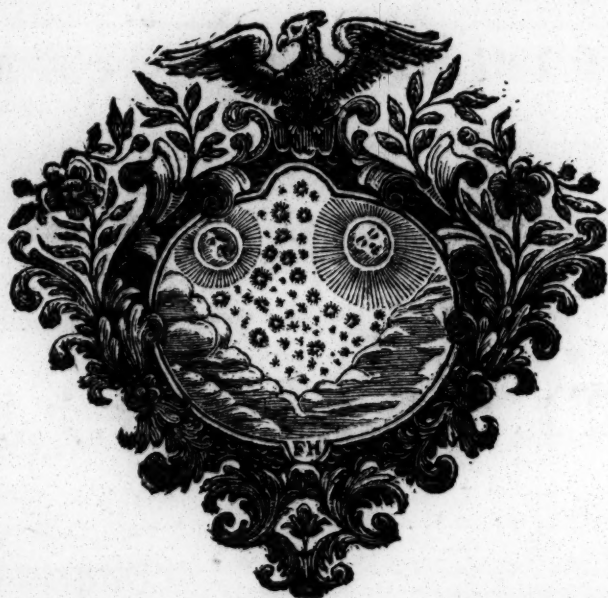
(5.) The spending your Time rather in strengthening than questioning your Evidences. You can't make too sure of Heaven, nor have too good Footing for your Hopes. Take not up with Probabilities, but labour after full Satisfaction about Title and Claim to your future, your eternal All. That being clear and easy in this Grand Affair when you are to die you may have nothing more

not be more to do, than to join with *Simeon*, who had
 e Guilt got Christ in his Arms, in saying,

'twill
 Hope
 Peace to
 God's
 is Soul

*Now, Lord, lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace;
 for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation.*

F I N I S.



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